The Lalitavistara Sūtra

The Voice of the Buddha

The Beauty of Compassion

Volume I

Dharma Publishing

आर्यललितविस्तरो नाम महायानसुत्रम्

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Lalitavistara

’Phags-pa rgya-cher-rol-pa
zhes-bya-ba theg-pa chen-po’i mdo

The Voice of the Buddha



Plate A

The Voice of the Buddha:
The Beauty of Compassion

Volume I

Translated into English from the French
by Gwendolyn Bays

Dharma Publishing

TIBETAN TRANSLATION SERIES

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Dedicated to
the Masters of the Buddhist tradition
and to Western students of the Dharma

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Publisher's Preface

THE LALITAVISTARA IS A WORK OF GREAT BEAUTY, with a vision that has no parallel in modern literature. Its elegant style reflects the dignity of its subject, and its rich imagery, building and building until it almost overwhelms the ordinary mind, gives the text the power to touch the heart directly.

The present English translation is an attempt to transmit at least some of this power and beauty. It is based primarily on two sources: the French translation from the Sanskrit and Tibetan by Edouard Foucaux, and the masterful eighth century translation from Sanskrit into Tibetan by Jinamitra, Danaśīla, Munivarman, and Ye-shes sde. The first step in our work was to translate Foucaux's French version into English. Since Foucaux's text is more a working draft than a finished translation, we found it necessary to compare this first English version word for word against the Tibetan. For occasional difficult passages we also consulted the Sanskrit original. As the draft developed, it was reviewed and revised many times for both style and content.

Despite these efforts, the accuracy and reliability of the present text are still provisional. Foucaux's work, published

in 1884, reflects the limited knowledge of Buddhism characteristic of his time, and is not always trustworthy. While we corrected omissions and errors wherever possible, we have certainly made mistakes of our own. In ancient times, Tibetan lo-tsā-bas reviewed every detail of their translations with learned paṇḍitas, but our limited resources and the press of other projects have kept us from following this model. Scholars will correct our work, and perhaps in future editions we will be able to include their changes. Still, even in imperfect form the Lalitavistara is a great treasure, and we are very pleased to be able to make it available.

We would have liked to include with this translation the original Sanskrit and Tibetan texts, but since such a publication would have extended over many volumes, it was not possible. We have instead sought to invoke these two textual traditions by prefacing each chapter with its title in Devanāgarī and Sanskrit script. To convey the aesthetic tradition associated with the text, we have included a number of full-color art reproductions depicting aspects of the Buddha. To make the work accessible to readers on all levels, we have also included a glossary and index.

Many people have participated in creating this work, and I acknowledge their efforts with gratitude. Gwendolyn Bays, who translated the French, first began this project at my request in 1976. Through the years she has shown great patience and dedication. Leslie Bradburn checked both the translation and portions of the original Tibetan against the French, and did extensive editorial work. Deborah Black compared the English translation to the Tibetan through several successive drafts, and worked with me on some of the difficult passages. She also made major editorial contributions. To each of them and to many others who also

played important roles I express my thanks. I am sure they join with me in dedicating the fruits of their efforts to Western students of the Dharma, and to the past masters who have kept alive the teachings of the Enlightened One through the ages.

Introduction

WHEN I WAS A CHILD IN TIBET, I read and heard many different accounts of the life of the Buddha. Not until years later did I realize that all these accounts were based on the Lalitavistara, an epic of grand proportions which presents the life of the Buddha in his own words, as he himself wished his followers to understand it.

The teachings of the Buddha are classified into twelve branches, or aṅgas. They are also organized into the collections of the Tripiṭaka: the Vinaya, which set forth the code of conduct for the Sangha; the Sūtras, which reveal the heart of the Buddha's realization; and the Abhidharma, which gathers and systematizes the teachings as a basis for practice and insight. The Lalitavistara finds its place within this structure as a Sūtra of the Mahāyāna tradition. It comes within the aṅga known as the vaipūlya, or extensive teaching. Like other vaipūlya Sūtras, its teachings are rich and varied, a source of insight and realization for all who hear and reflect on them.

Many different sources describe the basic events recounted in the Lalitavistara. The Buddha Śākyamuni was born as Siddhārtha Gautama, son of the king of the Śākyas,

a people well-known in early Indian history. He grew to an incomparable manhood, and became enlightened while seated in meditation beneath the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gayā. After his Enlightenment, he taught for forty-five years before passing away at Kuśinagara.

In the Lalitavistara, the Buddha himself describes these events from the time before his birth to the time when he first transmitted his realization to others. The account follows the traditional framework based on twelve acts common to all Buddhas, beginning with existence in the Tuṣita heaven prior to the final rebirth. The Bodhisattva resolves to appear in the world to demonstrate the path to Enlightenment, and enters his mother's womb in the form of a white elephant. Emerging from his mother's right side after ten lunar months, he immediately takes seven steps in each direction, proclaiming his future destiny and his resolve to lead all beings to liberation from suffering.

Siddhārtha grows to manhood, demonstrating complete mastery of all worldly arts. At the proper time, he marries the maiden Gopā, and for many years enjoys a life of luxury and ease in the palace. At length, having shown that even such pleasures bring no lasting happiness, he departs from home for the life of a wandering monk. After six years of extreme ascetic practice, he rejects the path of austerities and proceeds to the Bodhi tree. There he seats himself, vowing not to arise until he has attained complete and perfect Enlightenment. In epic battle with Māra, king of the forces of deception, he vanquishes all obscurations and penetrates to the true nature of all reality.

Traveling to the Deer Park at Sarnāth, the Buddha turns the Wheel of the Dharma for the first time, setting forth the

basic teachings of the path toward liberation. Later the Buddha would turn the Dharma Wheel a second and a third time, revealing the omniscience of the Prajñāpāramitā and demonstrating the vastness of perfect realization. While the Second and Third Turnings are not described in the Lalitavistara, the Sūtra itself offers insight into all three Turnings.

In reading the Lalitavistara, it soon becomes evident that the Buddha is being described on several levels at once. First, the Buddha is immutable and universal, free of all limitations: omnipresent, already enlightened since beginningless time, and inseparable from the Dharma and the Sangha. At the same time, he is a being whose training through countless lifetimes has made him more than human, greater even than the gods. The many miraculous displays recounted in the Lalitavistara demonstrate that the Buddha moves in a realm not normally accessible to ordinary vision and understanding.

Finally, the Buddha is an individual human being, born in a certain time and place, whose life can be understood on the level of personal growth and inner dynamics. On this level, his knowledge is incomplete, and he must discover anew the truths that he will later communicate to others. The Lalitavistara presents this aspect of the Buddha as an emanation or manifestation produced solely for the purpose of instructing sentient beings.

Keeping these different aspects of the Buddha in mind can help guide the reader through the rich treasures of the Lalitavistara. Even these dimensions of his being, however, only hint at the true nature of the Enlightened One. The Mahāyāna teaching of the Buddha's three-fold embodi-

ment and the inner Mantrayāna teachings of the five Buddha families both express aspects of the Buddha. Countless other teachings unfold still further dimensions. It has been said that if Mañjuśrī, the Bodhisattva who embodies the highest wisdom and understanding, set out to explain the qualities and the nature of the Buddha in terms accessible to the conceptual mind, he could not do so, though he spent a full lifetime in the effort. The ultimate nature of the Tathāgata is manifold and inexpressible, a truth that the Lalitavistara conveys so well.

Among the Buddhists of northern Asia, the Lalitavistara is greatly revered as a powerful antidote to the misery and basic ignorance that plague human existence. The Sūtra's manifold teachings, born directly from the Buddha's deep and penetrating samādhi, operate on many levels simultaneously. They have inspired countless readers and listeners with confidence and dedication.

Within the Theravada tradition of Southeast Asia, other accounts of the life of the Buddha are preferred to the Lalitavistara, which is not regarded as a canonical work. The Mahāyāna tradition of the North, however, understands the Buddha as manifesting differently in accord with the circumstances and the capacity of the audience. The vision of the Buddha presented in the Lalitavistara accords with the penetrating insight and vast perspective of the great Bodhisattvas, and it seems only natural that it would exist side by side with other accounts addressed to a different understanding.

Western readers will feel free to appreciate this text without resolving the issue of its canonical status. Still, they may wonder exactly why the Mahāyāna tradition considers

the Lalitavistara to be such an unsurpassed expression of the Buddha's teachings, when other Sūtras offer more philosophical content or present express instructions in meditation. Perhaps the answer is that this most precious teaching evokes a deep understanding of the Tathāgata himself. Although study and meditation are of course very helpful, the best way to begin a serious investigation of Buddhist teachings is to look at who the Buddha really is. The Enlightened One exemplifies the goal of all Buddhist practice, and whoever has a clear vision of the goal will move surely along the path to its realization. Yet how many of those who follow the Dharma in the West have really studied the life of the Buddha?

Reading the Lalitavistara can help counteract a number of common misconceptions about Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha alike. The image of a laughing, fat-bellied Buddha depicted in some popular art has little to do with the reality of Enlightened Being, and superficial statements about nirvāṇa and Enlightenment made by individuals not fully trained in a living tradition offer little real insight into the Dharma. When individuals gathered in the name of the Buddha spend their time socializing or in poorly understood ritual observances, or in exchanging personal opinions on doctrine, they are not necessarily acting as true representatives of the Sangha. Anyone who reads and reflects on the Lalitavistara will avoid such confusions.

Ultimately, the Lalitavistara does far more than clarify our misconceptions. The beauty and power of the Sūtra's language awaken our deeper faculties, and its vision shows us worlds we do not usually see. As the Sūtra unfolds, our understanding deepens and our hearts open. Then we truly begin to learn about the Buddha.

Unique in history, the Enlightened One stands alone among gods and men alike. Even the Creators and Destroyers of universes revere his matchless knowledge, and acknowledge him as their teacher. The Buddha's omniscience, manifested in all his actions, shows us the limits of our own knowledge. Unlike the Enlightened Ones, we can never know the outcome of our actions, and we can never be sure that we will attain our goals. As we come to see this, we turn to the Tathāgata with a joyful heart, confident that we have found a guide of perfect wisdom.

Yet this is only part of the story, for the Buddha is not a divine messenger or an incarnation, come to earth to offer guidance. Instead, the Enlightened One is himself a human being who has attained the perfection of his human qualities. Through the teaching of pratītyasamutpāda, which reveals the truths that govern the arising and passing away of all things, he demonstrates that nothing is ultimately beyond our understanding. By teaching that the realm of Enlightenment is inseparable from our own being, he sets us on the path that leads in the end to our also becoming Buddhas. Through his continuing presence, he holds open the door of liberation for all sentient beings, fulfilling with unending joy the vow that guides his conduct throughout all time and space.

The Voice of the Buddha

Volume I

Plate 1





Plate 1

निदानपरिवर्तः

། གླེང་གཞིའི་ལེའུ །

The Setting

OM! SALUTATIONS TO ALL BUDDHAS AND BODHISATTVAS, to the venerable Śrāvakas and Pratyekabuddhas who abide in the ten directions in the endless regions of the infinite universe.

Thus I once heard: The Lord was dwelling in Śrāvasti, in the Jetavana Grove, the pleasure garden of Anathapiṇḍada, together with twelve thousand monks led by the Āyuṣmat Ajñānakauṇḍinya, as well as by the Āyuṣmat Aśvajit, the Āyuṣmat Vāṣpa, the Āyuṣmat Mahānāma, the Āyuṣmat Bhadrika, the Āyuṣmat Yaśodeva, the Āyuṣmat Vimala, the Āyuṣmat Subāhu, the Āyuṣmat Pūrṇa, and the Āyuṣmat Gavāṁpati, the Āyuṣmat Uruvilvā Kāśyapa, the Āyuṣmat Nadīkāśyapa, the Āyuṣmat Gayākāśyapa, together with the Āyuṣmat Śāriputra, the Āyuṣmat Maudgalyāyana, the Āyuṣmat Mahākāśyapa, the Āyuṣmat Mahākātyāyana, and the Āyuṣmat Kaphila, the Āyuṣmat Kauṇḍinya, the Āyuṣmat Cunanda, the Āyuṣmat Pūrnamaitrāyanīputra, as well as the Āyuṣmat Aniruddha, the Āyuṣmat Nandika, the Āyuṣmat Kasphila, the Āyuṣmat Subhūti, the Āyuṣmat Revata, the Āyuṣmat Khadiravaṇika, along with the Āyuṣmat Amogharāja, the Āyuṣmat Mahāpāramika, the

Āyuṣmat Vakkula, the Āyuṣmat Nanda, and the Āyuṣmat Rāhula, the Āyuṣmat Svāgata, and the Āyuṣmat Ānanda.

Together with these twelve thousand monks were thirty-two thousand Bodhisattvas who had completely obtained all the perfections of the Bodhisattva and had but one birth remaining. They had obtained the superior knowledge of the Bodhisattva and had also mastered the Bodhisattva dhāraṇīs and energy. They had accomplished all the aspirations of the Bodhisattva and had understood the Bodhisattva knowledge in all its forms; they had mastered all the samādhis of the Bodhisattva and obtained the Bodhisattva powers; they had entered into all-embracing patience and attained each of the stages of the Bodhisattva.

All these thirty-two thousand Bodhisattvas were led by the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Maitreya, together with the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Dharaṇīśvararāja, the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Siṁhaketu, and the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Siddhārthamati, the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Praśānta-cāritramati, the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Pratisaṁvitprāpti, the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Nityoyukta, as well as by the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva Mahākaruṇācandrin.

At this time the Lord had retired into the large city of Śrāvasti. There he lived, honored, respected, and revered. He was deluged with offerings: from the four assemblies; from kings, princes, ministers, and officers; from kṣatriyas, brāhmins, merchants, and householders; from inhabitants of both city and country; from tīrthikas, śramaṇas, brāhmins, carakas, and parivrājakas.

There the Lord received all forms of goods and necessities: dishes both savory and abundant, the clothing and

alms befitting a monk, bedding and medicines. Richly endowed and famous, the Lord remained detached from everything, like the lotus shedding drops of water. And the great accounts of the Lord's repute spread throughout the world:

"The Bhagavan is the Tathāgata, Arhat, the perfect and complete Buddha, endowed with perfect knowledge and perfect conduct. He is the Sugata, the Lord of Knowledge, unexcelled leader of those yet to be trained, teacher of both gods and men. The Lord Buddha has appeared in the world. Endowed with the five eyes, he abides together with gods of both this world and beyond; he abides with demons and with Brahmā, with śramaṇas and with brāhmins, and with many other beings, both gods and ordinary mortals.

"Having attained complete omniscience, he taught the Dharma: good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good at the end, truly excellent in meaning and beautiful in expression, fully accomplished, free of contamination, truly pure, truly pristine, and maintaining its purity. Such is the Dharma which he has taught."

One day at midnight, the Lord entered into the meditation called Buddhālaṁkākaravyūha, Arrangement of the Ornaments of the Buddha. He had scarcely entered into this samādhi when from the top of his head, from the very crown, there shone forth a beam of light called Pūrvabuddha-anupasmṛti-asanga-ajñāna-āloka-alaṁkāra, Light of the Unbounded Wisdom Which Recalls the Previous Buddhas. This beam illuminated all the dwellings of the gods of the Śuddhāvāsa realm, attracting innumerable devaputras, including the devaputra Maheśvara. From within the beam of light stanzas of exhortation came forth:

"Come meet with the Muni Śākya Siṁha,
the Sage, Lion of the Śākyas.
His wisdom conquers darkness
with a light beautiful and splendid, spotless and pure,
for his body is tranquil, his mind both calm and virtuous.

"Have recourse to the Masterful One,
who naturally actualizes the Dharma.
Ocean of Knowledge, pure one of great strength,
he is Lord of the Dharma and knower of all things;
he is Master of the Munis, God of Gods,
worshipped by gods and men.

"Do not let your sight and hearing pass uselessly,
but approach the One who holds
the peace of final deliverance,
master of the mind so difficult to subdue,
master of the mind free from the snares of demons.

"He has manifested himself in the matchless Dharma,
dispelling the shadows while teaching the good way.
He is the Buddha whose knowledge of tranquility
and action is unexcelled. Approach him with devotion!

"He is the King of Physicians
who dispenses the elixir of immortality.
He is the greatest of orators,
destroyer of the troops of the wicked.
Knowing well the true meaning of the Dharma,
he is the Friend of the Dharma.
He is the True Guide who reveals the path."

Touched by the luminous rays called Light of the Unbounded Wisdom Which Recalls the Previous Buddhas, moved by verses such as these, the devaputras of the Śuddhāvāsa realm emerged from their perfectly tranquil meditation. Through the power of the Buddha, they remembered the previous Lord Buddhas of innumerable kalpas, immeasurable beyond calculation and number, and for each of the Buddhas they recalled their qualities and their Buddha-fields, their circle of attendants, and their teachings.

In the middle of that peaceful night, Iśvara, a devaputra of the Śuddhāvāsa realm, together with the devaputra Maheśvara, as well as Nandana, Candana, Mahita, Praśānta, Vinīteśvara, and other devaputras of Śuddhāvāsa in great number, shining with many brilliant colors, illumined the entire Jetavana Grove with their divine splendor. Appearing before the Lord, touching their heads to his feet, they stood to one side and said to the Bhagavan:

"There is, Lord, a part of the Dharma which bears the name Lalitavistara, a Sūtra of great extent which illumines the roots of the virtue of the Bodhisattvas, which reveals in detail the descent from the Tuṣita heaven, the entering into the womb, and the purposeful stay in the womb of the mother; which shows clearly the Bodhisattva's power over the earth at his birth, his superior conduct as an infant and youth, and his superiority over all other beings in practice of the worldly arts. This teaching shows the superior quality of the Bodhisattva's actions as a youth and indicates everything which demonstrates his superiority over all beings in the practice of writing and cyphering, palmistry and astrology, fencing, archery, fighting, and wrestling.

"This teaching celebrates all the Bodhisattva's actions, as well as his appreciation of all things, including women. It displays the coming together of the Bodhisattva's activities, the results of his attainments, and the pleasures of the Bodhisattva, the various actions of the Bodhisattva, the destruction of the circle of demons, and the strength of a Tathāgata. This teaching tells of the Bodhisattva's fearlessness, his acquiring of the eighteen Buddhadharmas, and the teachings of the incomparable Buddhadharma as taught by past Tathāgatas: Padmottara, Dharmaketu, Dīpaṁkara, Guṇaketu Mahākara, and Ṛṣideva, Śrītejas, Satyeketu, Vajrasaṁhata, Sarvāvibhū, and Hemavarṇa, Atyucchagāmi, Prāvahasāgara, Puṣpaketu, Vararūpa, by Sulochana, Ṛṣigupta, Jinavaktra, Unnata, Puṣpita, and Ūrṇitejas, Pushkara, Suraśmi, Maṅgala, Sudarśaṇa, as well as Mahāsiṁhatejas, Sthitabuddhidatta, Vasantagandhin, Satyadharmavipulakīrti, Tiṣya, Puṣya, Lokasundara, and Vistīrṇabheda, Ratnakīrti, Ugratejas, and Brahmatejas, Sughoṣa, Supuṣpa, Sumanojñaghoṣa, Suceṣṭarūpa, and by Prahasitanetra, Guṇarāśi, Meghasvara, and Sundaravarṇa, Jinavaktra, Āyustejas, Salīlagajagāmin, Lokābhilāṣita, and Jitaśatru, Saṁpūjita, Vipaśyi, Śikhin, and by Viśvabhū, Krakucchanda, and Kanakamuni; teachings also taught formerly by the Kāśyapa Tathāgata Arhat, perfect and accomplished Buddha.

"May the Lord once more bring this teaching to light, out of compassion for the world, as medicine for myriads of beings, for the happiness of many beings, for the flowering of the multitudes, for the happiness and greater purpose of gods and men, so that all beings may be well and happy. May this teaching once more be brought to light, to explain the Great Vehicle, to subjugate all opponents, and

to suppress all demons. May it reveal to all the ways of the Bodhisattva and inspire great effort in all who would follow the Bodhisattva vehicle. May it be brought to light to show clearly the accomplishments of a Buddha, so that the Dharma may be embraced and the continuity of the Three Jewels ensured."

Thus they spoke. And the Lord consented by his silence, taking pity on the ordinary beings of the world and on the gods and devaputras as well.

Knowing by the silence of the Buddha that he had given his consent, the devaputras were happy and content. Transported with joy, their minds full of delight, they touched their heads to the feet of the Lord. Circumambulating the Buddha three times, they rained down around him divine sandalwood powders, powders of aloes, and māndārava flowers, and then disappeared.

As the night came to an end, the Bhagavat proceeded to a bamboo grove, surrounded by the crowd of Bodhisattvas and the assembly of Śrāvakas, and seated himself upon the seat prepared. The Lord then addressed the assembly:

"O monks, during the peaceful night, the devaputras of the Śuddhāvāsa realm named Iśvara and Maheśvara as well as Nandana, Sunandana, and Candana, Mahita, Praśānta, Vinīteśvara, and many other devaputras of Śuddhāvāsa came before me." And so the Buddha told them of the gods' appearance and disappearance.

The Bodhisattvas and the Mahāśrāvakas bowed with joined palms to the Buddha and spoke to him as follows:

"May it please the Lord to teach us clearly the extensive teaching of the Dharma called Lalitavistara—as medicine

for numerous beings, for the happiness of numerous beings, out of compassion for the world, for the benefit of a great number of beings, for the succor of gods and men, and for the Bodhisattvas Mahāsattvas present and future."

Moved with great compassion for the Bodhisattvas Mahāsattvas, for the Mahāśrāvakas, for gods, men, and asuras, for all the world, the Lord consented to this request by his silence. Then the Buddha began to speak:

"Last night, O monks, I was sitting where we now sit.
Joyfully was I sitting, free from all fettering passion,
with mind in perfect balance, fixed on a single point.

"There came before me a host of devaputras
of great supernatural power,
shining with spotless splendor,
in colors brilliant and delightful to behold.
Illuminating the Jeta Grove with their glory,
the devaputras approached, joyous in my presence.

"There were Maheśvara, Candana, Iśa, and Nanda,
Praśāntacitta, Mahita, Sunanda,
as well as the devaputra Śānta,
along with several tens of millions of other gods.

"Bowing at my feet, each devaputra
circled around me, presenting his right side.
Bowing with folded hands, they remained near,
and filled with respect, they said to me:

" 'O Muni, this comprehensive Sūtra,
rich in what destroys the passions,

this great discourse, has been taught
by all the previous Tathāgatas,
to benefit and succor all the worlds.

" 'With consideration for all the Bodhisattvas,
may the Muni once again explain this Great Vehicle,
this teaching which suppresses all demons
and subdues all opponents.' "

So did the gods petition the Buddha,
who, with his silence, gave consent.
Thrilled with delight and joy, happy and content,
the gods cast flowers all about.

Listen then, O monks, and carefully,
to this great discourse, this comprehensive Sūtra,
taught for the sake of benefitting the world,
by all the Tathāgatas who have come before.

The First Chapter
The Setting



Plate 2





Plate 2

समुत्साहपरिवर्तः

། ཡང་དག་པར་སྤྲོ་བར་བྱ་བའི་ལེའུ །

The Great Inspiration

AND NOW, O MONKS, WHAT IS THIS EXTENSIVE TEACHING of the Dharma called Lalitavistara?

O monks, the Bodhisattva was abiding in Tuṣita heaven. Having obtained consecration, he was worshipped by those who are worshipped; one hundred thousand gods honored and celebrated him, showing their respect, crowning him with praises. His aim had been attained; exalted through his aspirations, he had acquired the wisdom which penetrates the whole Buddhadharma.

The Bodhisattva was endowed with the great and perfectly pure eye of wisdom, with great memory and intelligence, with realization, prudence, and modesty, with broad knowledge intensified by joy. He had practiced great skillful means, practiced the ultimate in giving, morality, patience, effort, meditation, and wisdom. With the great love of the brahmavihāra path, with great loving kindness and great compassion, with great joy and great equanimity, and through a higher knowledge, the Bodhisattva had truly arrived at boundless and undefiled knowing.

With mindfulness and complete non-attachment well acquired, with the foundations of supernatural abilities, with the powers and strengths, with the branches of awakened understanding and the path, the Bodhisattva had arrived at the truly accomplished fulfillment of all the teachings connected with true awakening. His body was well endowed with the principal signs and secondary marks, which were produced by the accumulation of immeasurable merit and wisdom.

The Bodhisattva, having pursued the path for countless aeons, always acted in accord with his words, and his words were always without error. His mind, which nothing could impede, was firm and unswerving, totally free from fraud or cunning. Having put aside all that is due to pride or arrogance, envy, fear, or dejection, the Bodhisattva was impartial toward all beings.

The Bodhisattva had honored innumerable hundreds of millions of Buddhas; in turn innumerable hundreds of millions of Bodhisattvas had gazed upon him, gaining for themselves the qualities that they perceived. Brahmā, Śakra, Maheśvara, the Guardians of the World, gods and nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, mahoragas, and rākṣasas had all gained splendor through their delight in the Lord.

The Bodhisattva had obtained skill in the understanding of all aspects of knowledge—he knew every single thought and intention, every single word. He was the perfect vessel of the precepts as taught by all the Buddhas; his memory was boundless and clear of all confusion.

Through mindfulness, renunciation, the foundations of supernatural abilities, the powers and strengths, and the

branches of awakened understanding, through the good path, transcendent wisdom, and the precious law of skillful means and merits, he had become captain of the great vessel of the Dharma. Across the four currents and beyond he traveled, inspired by great intention. A firm leader in battle, he subdued all demons and opponents and completely tamed all adversaries. Armed with the vajra-bolts of the greatest knowledge, he destroyed the hosts of harmful fettering passions.

From the wellspring of the enlightened mind, the stream of mercy, issuing from the higher intentions, flows forth strong and deep. Steeped in the waters of the heroism of the Dharma, the Bodhisattva arises like a lotus from the boundless lake of many qualities. The essence of skillful means flows within him, coursing through the stems of awakening, forming stamens of contemplation, anthers of meditation. Untouched by pride or arrogance, his broad unblemished leaves unfurl in the pristine moonlight. The fragrance of awareness, revelation, morality, and serenity lift toward the ten points of space. Elder of knowledge in the world, yet unstained by the eight worldly dharmas, he is the Lotus of Great Men. The sweet perfume of merit and the accumulation of wisdom wafts forth; the sun's rays of knowledge and wisdom shine upon the extended blossoms of the hundred-petaled lotus of his vision, perfect and pure.

The Bodhisattva is the Lion of Men. He demonstrates the great fleetness of the four foundations of supernatural abilities; the four noble truths are his teeth and claws, his canines the four abodes of Brahmā. The four means of conversion compose his noble head; his noble body is perfected through understanding of the twelvefold cycle of depen-

dent origination. His mane is formed of knowledge and wisdom, braided into the thirty-seven conditions of awakening, perfectly complete. The three doors of deliverance are his roaring mouth; his clear eyes form his intense insight and deep calm. He dwells in the grottoes and the mountain caves of meditation, complete deliverance, contemplation, and equanimity. Striding forth from the forest of discipline, he treads the four paths of pure action. He bears himself with the power of the four fearlessnesses and the ten strengths. His unwavering courage is unmoved by the frightfulness of creation and destruction. His great roar of egolessness tames the tīrthikas, those herds of deer and donkeys.

The Bodhisattva is the great Sun of Merit, clearing away the film of obscuring ignorance, burning with glory in the midst of gods and men. From his sphere of contemplation and complete deliverance, rays of wisdom shine forth, burning with strength and valor, outshining the glimmer of the tīrthika glowworms. Blazing white, dispelling all darkness, he entrances with beauty too bright for the eye to behold.

The Bodhisattva is the Great Moon, whose rays open the most skilled of gods and men like kumuda flowers. He is the great sphere of contemplation, complete deliverance, and knowledge, surrounded by the shining stars of one hundred thousand gods. Moonbeams pour forth from the joy of his awakening, as he casts light over the four continents.

Possessing the great jewel of the seven branches of awakening, the Bodhisattva is the great Dharma King, impartial toward all beings. With unimpeded intelligence he draws forth abundant and complete benefit from the ascetic practices of the ten virtues. Born of the race of Cakravartins, he turns the precious Dharma Wheel unceasingly.

Imbued with all the precious Dharma, the profound cycle of dependent origination, so difficult to fathom, he is never tired of hearing the Teachings. His morality and wisdom are always well balanced and abundant.

His eyes are like the calyx of a great lotus; his mind is wide, like earth and ocean. His thoughts are the equal of earth, air, fire, and water. Strong and firm like Mount Meru, his understanding is unshakable. Rid of passion and of anger, his intelligence is unmatched, his mind vast and spotless as space. Truly pure is his exalted mind, and his generosity is complete. He has properly acted in the past and done well in all things. The ornament of truth well adorns him.

Having sought out the roots of virtue, he is clothed in virtue. Indeed, his virtue is unshakable, for he has practiced tirelessly for seven endless kalpas. He has made gifts of the seven kinds and practiced earnestly the five articles of merit. He has conducted himself in accord with the three ways of the body, the four ways of speech, and the three ways of the mind. He has followed well the path of the ten virtuous works.

He has done forty different types of perfect actions, and has planted the forty types of genuine aspirations. The forty highest thoughts are his, and the forty kinds of genuine liberation. He has attended on forty times one hundred thousand niyutas of koṭis of Buddhas, and with uprightness offered them the forty types of genuine devotion. He has offered gifts to the fifty-five hundred thousand niyutas of koṭis of Buddhas, and has rendered service to the hundreds of millions of Pratyekabuddhas. Because of him, countless living beings have entered the highest realms and proceeded to liberation.

He desires to become a Buddha, with perfect Enlightenment, complete and unequaled. With only one lifetime remaining, he dwells now in Tuṣita heaven, bearing the name of Śvetaketu. Honored by all the gods as the greatest of their sons, he will be born again from Tuṣita into the world of man, soon to attain the perfect and complete qualities of a Buddha.

Among the thirty-two thousand palaces of the gods, adorned with terraces, with porticos, and with gabled pavilions, in the greatest celestial palace of all, the Bodhisattva is seated. Within the palace are trellises adorned with tiny jeweled bells, parasols, and standards and streamers floating unfurled; scattered about are blossoms of the māndārava coral tree. The palace echoes with the songs of a hundred thousand niyutas of koṭis of apsarases. Myriad varieties of flowering trees can be seen: pearly-white atimuktakas, magnolias, trumpet vines, orchid trees, mahāmucilindas, aśokas, banyan trees, persimmon trees, āsanas, karṇikāras, kesaras, śala, coral trees, and many others.

Within the palace are level fields of sweetly perfumed flowers, sheltered by golden trellises; flowers such as jyotiṣ, mālikas, barasikas, taraṇīs, sumanas, balis, and kotaranis. And lotuses abound—blue utpalas, kumudas, and white lotuses as well. Birds fly in the sweet-smelling air, calling out to each other—parrots and cuckoos, geese and peacocks, mallards and kunālas, kalaviṅkas and pheasants.

The palace is so centered that it is always before the eyes of one hundred thousand niyutas of koṭis of gods. Its rooms resound with the clear expression of the Dharma that destroys all fettering emotions with the strength of joy. All within its gilded halls are free from anger and rage, pride,

haughtiness, and arrogance. Here are born joy, serenity, and mindfulness intensified by joy.

While the Bodhisattva is seated at his ease within the great palace, a great discussion of the Dharma is taking place. Eighty-four thousand melodies resound, brought forth by the accumulated merits of the Bodhisattva. These stanzas of exhortation ring forth:

You who have generated the light
of infinite knowledge, memory, and judgment,
keep in mind your treasure of abundant merit.
With your matchless strength and great energy,
reflect upon the prediction of Dīpaṁkara!

You who have wiped out the sin of pride,
who have a heart full of virtue,
hold fast to the developed, spotless mind,
rid of the three defilements.
Bring to fruition your former practice of giving!

Bear in mind the strengths
of your tranquility and morality,
your austerities and patience,
your restraint and effort,
meditation, power, and wisdom.
Reflect upon all you have done
during hundreds of millions of kalpas!

Remember, remember, you whose renown is boundless,
the hundreds of millions of Buddhas you have honored.
Reflect upon your compassion for all;

remember your great actions.
Now is the time! Do not let it slip away!

Prepare to be reborn,
you who know the way of life and death,
destroyer of the fetters of old age and of death.
Liberator, they await you—
the gods, the asuras, and the nāgas,
the yakṣas and the gandharvas.

Even a thousand kalpas of ascetic practices
are like the water of the ocean—
they cannot bring true satisfaction.
But your heartfelt virtue gives great satisfaction,
so satisfy the beings long tormented by thirst.

Do you not possess unblemished reputation?
Are you not delighted with the Dharma
and impervious to desire?
Your vision is stainless, unclouded.
So take pity on the world, and on the gods as well!

Tens of millions of gods
hear the Dharma from you, yet are not satisfied.
They do not know true leisure,
but rather tend to waste their time.
Look upon them!

You with stainless vision,
you see the Buddhas of the world in all the ten directions
listening to the Dharma—this great law.
Share it with the world!

Your merit and splendor, O Magnificent One,
have brought glory to the Tuṣita heaven.

Now, O Merciful One,
unfurl the victory banner in the world!

Many gods now awaken to understanding.
Passing beyond the desire realm, greatly rejoicing,
they enter the realm of form and say:
"May we attain supreme Enlightenment,
the aim of our vows."

O Protector, you have destroyed the demons
and have conquered the tīrthikas.
You hold awakening in the palm of your hand.
The time is now. Do not let it pass!

The world is scorched by the fire of emotions.
O Great Hero, cover the world like a bank of clouds
to soothe the passions of gods and men.
Let fall the rain of immortality!

Vastly skilled in medicine,
you can easily cure longstanding disease.
Apply the remedy of the three liberations;
establish all in the well-being of Nirvāṇa!

When they do not hear the lion's roar,
foxes yammer fearlessly.
Call out the Buddha's lion roar,
and frighten the fox-like tīrthikas!

You hold the lamp of wisdom in your hand;
your effort has given you the strength of the earth.
Now touch the earth with the palm of your hand
and conquer!

The Four Guardians of the World
wait to offer you the alms bowl.

Śakra and Brahmā, and
hundreds of thousands of others
will receive you at your birth.

Possessing the heritage of wisdom,
you look at those of noble lineage and choose the best;
dwelling among them, you will demonstrate
a lineage to be admired,
and the conduct of a Bodhisattva.

Placing a precious jewel within the vase
brings great glory!
You who are the most precious of faultless jewels,
unfurl the victory banner in the world!
Thus do the melodies resound,
exhorting the Merciful One:
"The time is at hand! Do not let it pass!"

The Second Chapter
The Great Inspiration



Plate 3

कुलपरिशुद्धिपरिवर्तः

།རིགས་ཡོངས་སུ་དག་པའི་ལེའུ།

The Complete Purity of Family

O MONKS, THE BODHISATTVA, moved by these words of exhortation, this counsel on the opportune time for the Dharma, stepped forth from his crystal palace to the great palace Dharmoccaya, where he was accustomed to teach the gods of the Tuṣita realm. There the Bodhisattva seated himself upon the lion throne.

All of the devaputras who shared the Bodhisattva's fortune, who shared the same vehicle, entered the palace after the Lord. The Bodhisattvas were summoned from the ten directions—those who followed the same line of conduct as the Bodhisattva, as well as devaputras, apsarases, and the ordinary gods. All the noble-minded entered the palace, forming an assembly of sixty-eight thousand koṭis of beings, all united in the same thought of profound meditation. And each of them was seated, as was fitting, upon a lion throne.

It was then, O monks, that the Lord said: "In twelve years the Bodhisattva will enter the womb of a mother." The devaputras of the Śuddhāvāsa realm all rejoiced at these words. Down to the land of Jambu they went and, having

first hidden their divine beauty under the guise of brāhmins, they studied with other brāhmins. And so they made known that whoever should enter the womb in a certain auspicious manner would be endowed with the thirty-two signs of a great man, and would take one of two forms, and not a third.

If he remained a householder, he would become a Cakravartin king, the victorious leader of four armies. A king of the Dharma, he would possess the seven precious treasures: the treasure of the wheel, the treasure of the elephant, the treasure of the horse, the treasure of the queen, the treasure of the jewel, the treasure of the chancellor, and the treasure of the counselor.

How does the Cakravartin king possess the treasure of the wheel? The kṣatriya king, having received royal consecration, having had his head anointed on the fifteenth day of the month, having fasted, goes out upon the terraces of the palace, surrounded by the women of his house. And there he sees the treasure of the divine wheel appear in the East, emitting a thousand rays, seven tāla trees in height, with circumference and hub all out of gold, not fabricated by any cartwright.

The consecrated kṣatriya king, having seen this precious divine wheel, reflects: "Because the precious divine wheel came before me, I know that I am truly a Cakravartin king. For I have heard that if the treasure of the divine wheel appears in the East for a kṣatriya king who has received royal consecration and has had his head anointed on the fifteenth day of the month, who has fasted and then gone out onto the terraces of the palace surrounded by the women of his house, such a one will be a Cakravartin king."

Throwing back his cloak from his shoulder, putting his right knee on the ground, the consecrated king reaches out his right hand to turn this divine wheel, proclaiming: "Turn with the Dharma, precious wheel of the gods! Never do what is not the Dharma!" And set in motion by the consecrated kṣatriya king, the divine wheel advances magically across the eastern sky, followed by the Cakravartin king with his powerful army. And wherever the divine wheel stops, the kṣatriya king stops with his army.

As he travels, all the kings of the East present themselves before him, bearing silver cups filled with gold or golden cups filled with silver. "You are welcome here, Lord," they say. "Please approach. Lord, this kingdom is extensive, prosperous, and agreeable. The population is numerous, and the land is filled with happiness. Pray remain here, Lord; it is your conquest; this land belongs to you."

The kṣatriya king replies to this address of the ruling kings: "May your kingdoms act in accord with the Dharma and never disagree with the Dharma. Do not kill, do not take what is not given, do not let desire lead you to commit adultery, and do not tell lies. Do not slander others or speak deceitfully. Do not act frivolously. Do not be covetous or entertain cruel thoughts or views. Do not support those who take life, and do not let yourself be influenced by those with false views. Do not let that which is against the Dharma enter these lands; do not be indulgent toward those who act against the Dharma."

In such a way the kṣatriya king conquers the eastern lands. Traveling then over the eastern ocean, he advances across the sky into the southern regions amidst miraculous apparitions. The Cakravartin king advances, followed by

his powerful army, and, as in the East, he subdues the region of the South. In like manner, he subdues the West and the North. Having entirely subjugated the North, he crosses the northern ocean, and by miraculous transformations through the sky, he easily regains his homeland and rests once more above the quarters of the queen. In this way, the kṣatriya king, having received royal consecration, possesses the treasure of the wheel.

How does the Cakravartin king possess the treasure of the elephant? For the Cakravartin king, who has received consecration, the treasure of the elephant comes forth in the same way as the wheel. Pure white, with four firm limbs, strong tusks and trunk, the elephant wears golden head ornaments and trappings; he bears a golden standard and is covered with golden netting. Endowed with supernatural power, he travels through the heavens, knowing the laws of transformation well. For this reason the king of elephants is called Bodhi.

When the consecrated kṣatriya king desires to experience the treasure of the elephant, he mounts the great beast at sunrise and travels to the ends of the earth. He travels this great earth surrounded by all its oceans and, when he returns to his capital, he experiences the joy of reunion. In this way the Cakravartin king possesses the treasure of the elephant.

How does the consecrated Cakravartin king possess the treasure of the horse? The kṣatriya king obtains the treasure of the horse as before. The horse is gray with a black head and a braided mane. He bears a golden standard and is adorned with golden necklaces and covered with golden netting. He is respectful when mounted. Endowed with

supernatural powers, he knows the laws of transformation well and so can travel through the skies. For this reason the king of the horses is called Bālāhaka, Thunder Cloud.

When the consecrated kṣatriya king desires to experience the treasure of the horse, he mounts Bālāhaka at sunrise and travels to the ends of the earth. Having traversed the great oceans, he returns to his capital and is welcomed with joy. Such is the way the Cakravartin king possesses the treasure of the horse.

How does the Cakravartin king possess the treasure of the jewel? For the kṣatriya king, who has received consecration, the precious jewel comes forth as before. It is brilliant blue and bears the eight facets of the lapus lazuli. Its brightness illuminates the entire apartment of the queen.

When the consecrated kṣatriya king desires to experience the precious jewel, he attaches it to the top of a standard at the stroke of midnight and goes forth into the royal park in the midst of darkness. Its brightness lights up the four armies to the distance of a yojana, and all within the circle of its light see each other as if it were day and say to one another: "Friends, get up! It is time for work; it is time to go to market. Daybreak has come; the sun has risen." Such is the way that the consecrated kṣatriya king possesses the treasure of the jewel.

How does the Cakravartin king possess the treasure of the queen? For the consecrated kṣatriya king, the treasure of the queen comes forth as before. She is infinitely agreeable and is born of the kṣatriya race. She is very beautiful, not too tall or too short, too fat or too thin, too lightskinned or dark. Benevolent, pleasing to the eyes, she is radiant and perfectly

proportioned. A perfume of sandalwood issues from all her pores; her breath is redolent with the fragrance of the blue lotus. Her skin is as soft to the touch as a garment of kācalindi cloth—during cold weather her body is warm to the touch, and during hot weather it is cool. Not even in her thoughts, much less in her body, does she feel desire for any other than the Cakravartin king. Such is the way the Cakravartin king possesses the treasure of the queen.

How does the Cakravartin king possess the treasure of the chancellor? For the kṣatriya king, who has received consecration, the treasure of the chancellor comes forth as before. He is learned, enlightened, and prudent. Endowed with the divine eye, he oversees to the extent of a yojana every treasure that is owned, as well as all that belongs to no one. With these treasures he supplies the Cakravartin king with whatever wealth is needed. Such is the way the Cakravartin king possesses the treasure of the chancellor.

How does the Cakravartin king possess the treasure of the counselor? For the Cakravartin king, the treasure of the counselor comes forth as before. He is wise, enlightened, and prudent; as soon as the king even considers equipping the army, the king's every thought is fulfilled by the counselor. Such is the way the Cakravartin king possesses the treasure of the counselor.

It is thus that the Cakravartin king possesses the seven treasures. In addition to these treasures, a thousand sons are born to him. Extremely handsome heroes, bold and strong, they conquer all hostile forces. And so the Cakravartin king rules over this great earth bounded by oceans, employing neither punishment nor weapons, but merely applying the Dharma.

But if the Bodhisattva leaves the life of a householder to wander as a homeless monk, he will become a Buddha. Renouncing all desires bound by emotion, he will become the teacher of gods and men, a peerless guide needing no aid from another.

At this time, other devaputras who had gone into the land of Jambu exhorted the Pratyekabuddhas, saying: "O Venerable Ones, leave the field of the Buddha free, for in twelve years the Bodhisattva will enter the womb of a mother."

O monks, there dwelt then in the great city of Rājagṛha, on the mountain Golāṅgulaparivartana, a Pratyekabuddha named Matāṅga. Having heard the call of the devaputras, he became as still as silt on a rock. Then he rose into the sky to the height of seven tāla trees and passed with equanimity into the realm of fire; in a brilliant flash he entered totally into Nirvāṇa. The fire consumed all bile and phlegm, all fibers and nerves, all bone, flesh, and blood, but relics fell to the ground, and even today traces of the footsteps of this ṛṣi can be seen.

O monks, at this time there lived near Vārāṇasī, in the Deer Park at Ṛṣipatana, five hundred Pratyekabuddhas. Having heard the devaputras' call, they rose into the sky to the height of seven tāla trees, and passing with equanimity into the realm of fire, in a flash entered into Nirvāṇa. All bile and phlegm, all fibers and nerves, all bone, flesh, and blood were completely consumed by the fire; only pure relics fell to the earth. And because of these relics, the place has been known since that time as Ṛṣipatana, the Place Where the Ṛṣis Rose; and because deer live there without fear, it is also known as Mṛgadāva, the Deer Park.

O monks, the Bodhisattva had four great visions during his stay in the Tuṣita palace. And what were these visions? They were the vision of the time, the vision of the land, the vision of the country, and the vision of the family.

Why, O monks, would the Bodhisattva devote himself to the vision of time? Because a Bodhisattva does not enter the womb of a mother at the beginning of a world when beings are first developing. But when the world is completely evolved, and when old age, sickness, and death appear, it is then that a Bodhisattva enters a mother's womb.

Why, O monks, would the Bodhisattva devote himself to the vision of the land? Because Bodhisattvas are not born in barbarian lands; they also are not born in the East, in Pūrvavideha, where men are tall and proud; not born in the West, in Aparagodāna, where men act like raging bulls; not born in the North, in Uttarakuru, where voices are harsh and unlovely. But rather Bodhisattvas are born in the South, in Jambudvīpa.

Why, O monks, would the Bodhisattva devote himself to the vision of the country? Because Bodhisattvas are not born in barbarian countries where men are ignorant and dull, dumb like sheep and incapable of distinguishing the meaning of right and wrong; but Bodhisattvas are born in the central countries.

Why, O monks, would the Bodhisattva devote himself to the vision of the family? Because Bodhisattvas are not born into the lower castes, śūdra or caṇḍāla, reed gatherers, cartwrights, or servants. Rather they are born in either of two castes: that of the brāhmins or kṣatriyas. In times when the brāhmins are most respected, they are born in a brāhmin

family; in times when the kṣatriyas are most respected, they are born in a kṣatriya family. Today, monks, the caste of the kṣatriyas is most respected; therefore, Bodhisattvas are born in a kṣatriya family.

And thus, relying upon the force of such reasoning, the Bodhisattva abided in Tuṣita heaven, devoting himself to the four great visions. Thereafter he remained silent.

O monks, the devaputras and Bodhisattvas asked each other: "Into what jewel of a family will the Bodhisattva be born? What mother's womb will he enter?"

And to this some answered: "The family of Vaidehi in the country of Magadha has prospered, and its fortune has increased. Into this happy and suitable family the Bodhisattva will enter, dwelling in the womb of a mother."

Others replied: "No, such a family is not suitable. And why not? Because neither the mother's nor the father's line is pure. The family's fortunes have arisen as the result of small merit, not of great merit. They are wild, inconstant, and changeable. The land itself is like a desert, lacking gardens, lakes, and ponds; their home is like the home of savages, set on the side of a cliff. Surely this family is not suitable."

Some said: "The family of Kośala has a numerous following; it also has great wealth, including many chariots. This is surely a suitable family for the Bodhisattva to enter, dwelling in the womb of a mother."

But others replied: "That family is not suitable either. And why not? Because the family of Kośala is descended from the Matāṅgas. Neither the father's nor the mother's line is pure; furthermore, they patronize base people. Not

only is the family ignoble, they are not truly wealthy. This is clearly not the right family."

Some said: "The happy family of King Vatsa has prospered and has increased in well-being. This family is suitable for a Bodhisattva to enter, dwelling in the womb of a mother."

Others replied: "That family is not suitable either. And why not? Because the family is common, violent, and inglorious. They are foreign in origin and have not achieved glory through the good works of either father or mother. The king himself speaks constantly of destruction and retribution. This family could not be the one."

Some said: "The great walled city of Vaiśālī, rich and extensive, happy and prosperous, teeming with multitudes, filled with joyful folk, is a city of summer houses and palaces designed with terraces, porticoes, columns, pavilions, and oval windows. It is a city filled with flowers from woods and gardens, fit for the gods. Surely it is fit for the Bodhisattva to enter and dwell in the womb of a mother."

But others replied: "This city is not suitable. And why not? Because those who live there do not interact with each other properly. They do not observe the Dharma; they respect neither the wise nor the aged nor their leaders. Each who dwells there thinks that he is king and so cannot accept the discipline or the authority of the Dharma. Therefore, that city is also unsuitable."

Some said: "In the walled city of Ujjayinī the Pradyota family keeps a great army and cavalry which have won many battles. Surely this family is the one suitable for a Bodhisattva to enter, dwelling in the womb of a mother."

But others replied: "That family is also unsuitable; fierce, inconsiderate, and cruel, quarrelsome and wild, they take little heed of their actions."

Some said: "In the walled city of Mathurā, rich, extensive, flourishing, and joyfully alive with multitudes of men and beasts, there stands the palace of King Subahu, who is master of a valiant army. Surely this family is suitable for a Bodhisattva to enter, dwelling in the womb of a mother."

Others replied: "This family is not suitable either, for the king was born in a family which has followed false views from generation to generation. He is like a barbarian. It is not fitting that a Bodhisattva in his last birth should enter into a family which upholds false views. Thus, this family is not suitable either."

Some said: "In the walled city of Hastināpura, there lives a royal family descended from the lineage of Pāṇḍava, the great hero endowed with strength and beauty, the conqueror of vast armies. Surely this family is suitable for the Bodhisattva to enter, dwelling in the womb of a mother."

Others responded: "This family is not suitable either. And why not? Because those who are born into the lineage of Pāṇḍava have confused their genealogy by calling Yudhiṣṭhira the son of Dharma, Bhīmasena the son of Vayu, Arjuna the son of Indra, Nakula and Sahadeva the sons of the two Aśvins. Therefore, this family is not suitable for the Bodhisattva to enter and dwell in the womb of a mother."

Some said: "The city of Mithilā, where well-being and pleasure abound, is the dwelling place of King Sumitra, ruler over powerful armies of both infantry and cavalry,

which are well equipped with elephants, horses, and chariots. He possesses vast quantities of gold and silver; pearls, diamonds, lapis lazuli, and conches; crystal, coral, and natural gold; and many different kinds of goods. He has the ability to overwhelm all the greatest kings and ministers, yet he is surrounded with friends and is clearly attracted to the Dharma. This, then, is the family suitable for the Bodhisattva to enter, dwelling in the womb of a mother."

But others replied: "This family is also unsuitable, for although King Sumitra has many spiritual qualities, he is too old to be a father. And since he already has numerous sons, this family is not the right one."

In this way the Bodhisattvas and gods examined the highest royal families in the sixteen great kingdoms of the land of Jambu and saw that all had faults.

While they were entertaining these thoughts, the devaputra Jñānaketudhvaja, who was firm in the Great Vehicle, and whom nothing could turn away from Enlightenment, spoke these words to the circle of Bodhisattvas and gods: "Friends, come hither. Let us go before the Bodhisattva and ask him into what jewel of a family, endowed with what perfections, he will be born for his last existence."

"Excellent!" they replied. And so, going before the Bodhisattva, they all respectfully joined their palms and questioned him: "Great Being! Into what jewel of a family, endowed with what perfections, will the Bodhisattva in his final birth be born?"

Considering the great assembly of Bodhisattvas and gods, the Bodhisattva replied: "Friends, the Bodhisattva in his last existence must be born in a family endowed with sixty-

four kinds of perfections. What are these sixty-four? They are as follows: The family is revered and known by all. Malevolence and pettiness are totally lacking. The family is of noble origins, perfect through the maternal lineage and perfect in its noble alliances. The family has made perfect marriages with those who are distinguished, those who have great knowledge, and those renowned for great power. The family has many offspring and many women. Fearless, it has never been humiliated or defeated, yet is not ambitious.

"This family is endowed with pure morals and wisdom. All advisers esteem this family, and its members are known for their appreciation of the arts; their skill in the arts is also renowned. Constant in its friendships, this family shows consideration for all beings, even those reduced to the condition of insects and wild beasts. Always the family remembers kindnesses. Clever and powerful, the family members are not tempted by desire or hatred; they are not moved by ignorance or fear. This family is above reproach. They do not dwell in ignorance, and they give alms abundantly. They have a taste for good works and for self-sacrifice, for giving, and for straightforward actions. They stand firm in their strength and have the strength of the great.

"The family in which the Bodhisattva will be born honors the ṛṣis and worships the gods; this family honors the caityas and honors its ancestors. No enmities enchain them. Honored throughout the ten directions, this family has a great following, a following which cannot be divided, a following which none can surpass. It is the best of families, the most respected of families, the most powerful of families. This family shows respect for the father and mother, respect for śramaṇas and for brāhmins.

"Great treasure of both grain and jewels accrue to this family, and riches in abundance—gold, jewels, pearls, lapis lazuli, conches, crystal, coral, natural gold, and silver, as well as many goods and artifacts. They own many elephants, horses, camels, cattle, and sheep, and many laborers and servants, both male and female, work for them. Hard working, the family succeeds in all undertakings.

"Born from the lineage of Cakravartin kings, the members of the family are friends who came together in past lives through virtuous works. Descended from the revered lineage of Bodhisattvas, they are free from even the slightest defects found in gods or demons, in Brahmā, or in śramaṇas or brāhmins. Friends, these are the sixty-four signs of the family of a Bodhisattva in his last existence.

"Friends, the Bodhisattva in his last existence will descend into the womb of a woman endowed with thirty-two kinds of good qualities. What are these thirty-two? They are as follows:

"The Bodhisattva in his last existence enters into the womb of a woman whose wisdom and intelligence are well known to all; she neglects no duty; she is of perfect lineage and birth. Her figure is perfect, her name is perfect, her proportions are perfect. She has not yet given birth and has perfect morals. Completely self-sacrificing, she is always smiling. Gentle and wise, fearless, experienced, learned, and guileless, she is without artifice, without anger, without jealousy or greed, without frivolity, and without inconstancy. She is not a gossip; she is patient, strong, modest, chaste, and emotionally stable. Desire, hatred, and ignorance have little hold upon her, and she is free from all possible faults of the feminine sex. She is strongly devoted to her husband.

"Friends, such are the thirty-two good qualities of the woman into whose womb the Bodhisattva in his last existence will enter. Moreover, friends, the Bodhisattva does not enter into the womb of a mother during the dark of the moon; rather, the Bodhisattva in his last existence enters during the light of the moon, the fifteenth day, when the moon is full and in conjunction with the constellation Puṣya. It is then that the Bodhisattva enters into the womb of a mother devoted to spiritual pursuits."

The Bodhisattvas and devaputras, having learned from the Bodhisattva of the complete purity of the family and the complete purity of the mother, considered: "What family could be so endowed with such unique qualities?" Having reflected upon this question and meditated upon it, they said to each other:

"The city of the Śākyas is large and prosperous; its people are flourishing and abide in happiness. Śuddhodana, the king, is of pure descent through both his mother and father, and has a pure wife. His duty is never swayed by his emotions. His body is strong and well-formed; he has brilliant merits.

"The king is from an illustrious family, descended from Cakravartins. He possesses great riches, treasure and jewels of every kind. He appreciates good works, and his views are untainted. In the whole land of the Śākyas, he is the only king honored and respected by all the chiefs and the merchants, by householders and by counselors, by all his attendants and advisers.

"Gracious and handsome, he is not too old and not too young. His fine body is endowed with every wonderful

quality. He makes good use of his time and of all things. He understands himself and is acquainted with spiritual pursuits. He understands people, he understands the world, and he knows the signs. As a Dharma King, he commands according to the Dharma. The great city of Kapilavastu, the home of the Śākyas, is truly the dwelling place of beings who have produced the root of virtue; all who are born there have a similar good fortune.

"The wife of King Śuddhodana is Māyādevī, daughter of the Śākya King Suprabuddha. She is in the flower of her youth and has perfect beauty. She has never given birth and so has neither son nor daughter. Her beauty is like that described in fables, or like that of a goddess adorned with jewels. Free from all possible feminine faults, she always speaks truth, her words never harsh or rough, never crude or scattered. Her speech is irreproachable and timely. She has the voice of the dove, yet does not chatter. Sweet and agreeable are her words, for she has truly put aside envy and arrogance, anger, pride, jealousy, haughtiness, and violence. She is generous, moral, contented, devoted to her husband, and free from desire for any other.

"Her face is beautiful, her features even. Hair the color of a dark bee frames her smooth forehead and unwrinkled brow. A smile is ever on her lips, and her speech is sweet and rhythmic. Harmonious and just, modest and blushing, she is totally without subterfuge, without pretentiousness or artifice. She never speaks with harshness or undue levity, nor does she indulge in irrelevant talk. Desire, hatred, and ignorance have little hold on her; she is sweet and patient. With great care she guards the conduct of her feet, her hands, and her eyes.

"Her skin is as soft to the touch as a garment of kācalindi cloth; her eyes are as clear as the new leaf of the blue lotus; her hands and feet are soft and delicate. Her nose is well-formed, and her arms firm and rounded like the rainbow. Her limbs are well-developed and of faultless beauty. Her lips are red as the bimba, and her neck is graceful, encircled with fine ornaments. Her teeth are pure white, like the flower of the sumana and the jasmine. She has lovely arms and smooth shoulders. Her firm waist has the curve of a bow; her navel is deep, her hips wide, soft, and round. Firm as a diamond, her body has no equal. Her thighs are as well-proportioned as the trunk of an elephant; her legs are like those of the antelope. The palms of her hands and the soles of her feet are pink, like the juice of the lac plant.

"She is entrancing to the sight of all beings. Among all women marked by superior beauty, she has no equal. She is the jewel, ravishing to the heart and eye. And since her body seems a product of illusion, she was given the name Māyā. Skilled in the arts, like a daughter of the gods of Nandana, she lives in the chambers of the women of the great King Śuddhodana. It is she who unites in herself all the qualities to be the mother of the Bodhisattva. Just as the Bodhisattva has indicated, the complete purity of family appears in the family of the Śākyas."

Concerning this it is said:

In the Dharmoccaya palace,
the Pure Being is seated
on the lion throne of the Dharma;

Bodhisattvas and gods of equal fortune
surround the Great Ṛṣi.

While seated there they wonder:
into what family will the Bodhisattva be born?
What family has the right qualities?
They wonder about the father and the mother:
what parents could be pure enough in nature?

And closely they survey the land called Jambu:
where could the royal kṣatriya family be?
All the families they look upon have faults,
excepting only the Śākyas:
here is a family without a fault.

Śuddhodana, born of royal kings,
descends from a race of masters of men;
his lineage is pure, the family
prosperous and orderly, respected by all.
The family observes religious law,
as do all who dwell in Kapilavastu.

The city itself is embellished with parks,
with palaces, vihāras, and gardens.
The native land must surely be
this shining city of Kapila.

The city is full of powerful men,
possessing the strength of several elephants.
They excel at archery and all the arts of war,
yet not one would harm another even to save himself.

The enchanting wife of King Śuddhodana
is the first among a thousand:
she has attained perfection.

Ravishing the heart like a magical creation,
she is called Māyādevī, Goddess of Illusion.

She has perfect beauty
like a daughter of the gods;
her shapely body sets off exquisite limbs:
neither gods nor men could see enough of Māyā.

Untarnished by desire or hatred,
she is lovable, sweet, and just,
and speaks with kindness always.
Modest and chaste, she too observes religious law.

Neither proud nor pompous, yet never frivolous,
she is free of subterfuge and jealousy, artifice and deceit.
With loving thoughts, she takes joy in giving.
Happy to observe her duty, she never acts unwisely.

Living in total truth,
her body and mind are well-controlled.
The faults of womankind the whole earth over
do not exist in her.

No woman in the world of gods,
in the world of the gandharvas, or the world of men,
is the equal of Māyādevī.
Where is the one who can surpass her?
She alone is suited to be the mother of the Ṛṣi.

For five hundred births, without exception,
she has been the mother of the Bodhisattva,
and Śuddhodana often the father.
Surely she has the necessary qualities.

She remains as diligent as an ascetic;
she practices the Dharma constantly.
And the king has consented to grant her wish
to live chastely for thirty-two months.

Wherever she may be,
whether standing, sitting, or sleeping,
her conduct is resplendent,
shining with the brilliance of her good works.

No god, asura, or man
could look upon her with lust;
those of noble and honorable ways
see her as a mother or a daughter.

Because of the virtuous works of Māyādevī,
the kingdom of the Śākyas prospers.
And as King Śuddhodana makes no inroads
into the lands of neighboring kings,
his fame and glory increase.

Like a vase fit to receive a treasure,
and a jewel sparkling with glory,
so are Māyā and this venerable being.

Here are two beings
endowed with great qualities:
the one to be the son,
the other to be the mother.
Blessed with the qualities of a goddess,
endowed with the strength of ten thousand elephants,
none but she could carry the greatest of men,
the great victory banner of the world.

Thus the great devaputras
and the Bodhisattvas perfected in knowledge
give praise to Māyā, the one endowed with virtues
and worthy to be mother of the one who will bring joy
to the family of the Śākyas.

The Third Chapter
The Complete Purity of Family

Plate 4



Plate 4

धर्मालोकमुखपरिवर्तः

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The Luminous Doors of the Dharma

O MONKS, IN THE TUṢITA HEAVENS stands Uccadhvaja, a great crystal palace which extends for sixty-four yojanas. Here the Bodhisattva had considered the family to which he would be born, and here also he taught the Dharma to the Tuṣita gods.

Now the Bodhisattva went again to Uccadhvaja to speak to the Tuṣita gods, saying: "May you meet together here for the teaching of Cyutyākāraprayoga, The Breath of Life. Listen well and commit this teaching to memory, for it is the last instruction you will hear from the Bodhisattva." Heeding these words, all the devaputras of Tuṣita, together with the host of apsarases, gathered in the palace. And the Bodhisattva blessed the four regions of the world from end to end; he blessed its every dimension.

So beautiful, so pleasant to behold, so well-adorned, so ravishing was this crystal palace, that all the devaputras of the realms of form and desire compared their own dwellings to cemeteries. Here the Bodhisattva sat upon his lion throne

surrounded by the rich results of his merits, now completely matured. This gem-covered throne, fitted with the finest cotton cloth, redolent of both heavenly perfumes and the smoke of purest incense, gleamed softly with the rainbow colors of fragrant flowers. The throne glowed with hundreds of thousands of precious stones, and over it hung a jeweled lattice, resonating with the sounds of many little bells.

Because of the hundreds of thousands of virtues of the Bodhisattva, many hundreds of thousands of jeweled bells rang forth. Many hundreds of thousands of precious parasols sheltered the throne, and many hundreds of thousands of jeweled nets covered it; silk cloths by the hundreds of thousands and silk fringes adorned it. Hundreds of thousands of goddesses sang, danced, and played music from every direction, giving praise to the Bodhisattva's hundreds of thousands of virtues.

Similarly, many hundreds of thousands of Guardians of the World stood at guard; many hundreds of thousands of Śakras gave him greeting, and many hundreds of thousands of Brahmās paid reverence to him. Hundreds of thousands of niyutas of koṭis of Bodhisattvas followed him, and hundreds of thousands of niyutas of koṭis of Buddhas of the ten directions reflected upon him. For hundreds of thousands of niyutas of koṭis of kalpas, he has matured transcendent merits; such are the circumstances which brought forth these conditions.

O monks, the Bodhisattva, endowed with such good qualities, seated himself on the lion throne and addressed himself to the great assembly of gods: "Friends, look upon the body of the Bodhisattva, well-adorned with the signs of a hundred merits. Look toward the east, the south, the west,

the north. Look above and below, to all sides, to all the ten directions."

The Bodhisattvas with only one life remaining, who dwell in the abode of Tuṣita, appeared in countless numbers, surpassing all calculation, for surrounded by a great assembly of gods, the Bodhisattva would teach the doors of the Dharma to bring happiness to the gods at the time of his descent from Tuṣita.

After the blessing of the Bodhisattva had allowed this assembly of gods to gaze upon these Bodhisattvas, the gods proceeded toward him and bowed with joined palms. Worshipping him with full prostrations, they pronounced these words respectfully: "How wonderful! This blessing of the Bodhisattva is inconceivable. Wherever we look, we can see countless Bodhisattvas!"

Then the Bodhisattva again addressed the great assembly of gods: "Listen, O friends. When the Bodhisattva is about to descend from Tuṣita, he teaches the luminous doors of the Dharma, which delight the gods. Listen well, friends. The doors of the Dharma number one hundred and eight. At the time of the Bodhisattva's descent, he explains them to the assembly of gods. The one hundred and eight are as follows:

Faith, friends, is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to an undivided intention.

Great pleasure is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads the confused mind to the state of serenity.

Whatever brings joy is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to a body which is clear and light.

Joyfulness is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the purification of the mind.

Restraint of the body is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the purification of the three faults of the body.

Restraint of speech is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the complete abandonment of the four faults of speech.

Restraint of the mind is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the complete abandonment of envy, wickedness, and false views.

Mindfulness of the Buddha is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to pure seeing of the Buddha.

Mindfulness of the Dharma is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the pure teaching of the Dharma.

Mindfulness of the Sangha is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the avoidance of wrongdoing.

Mindful practice of giving is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the giving up of everything.

Mindful practice of good conduct is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the perfect fulfillment of aspiration.

Mindfulness of the gods is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to excellence of mind.

Love is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the unsurpassable glory of meritorious giving of material gifts.

Compassion is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the virtue of doing no harm.

Joy is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the clearing away of all displeasure.

Equanimity is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to contempt for desire.

Full realization of impermanence is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to overcoming passion for the objects of desire, whether they have form or are formless.

Full realization of suffering is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the cessation of suffering through prayer.

Full realization of egolessness is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to no longer fixing upon an ego identity.

Full realization of peace is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to not being inflamed by passion.

Self-respect is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to inner peace.

Modesty is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to outer peace.

Truthfulness is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to deceiving neither gods nor men.

Reality is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to not deceiving oneself.

Practice of the Dharma is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to depending on the Dharma.

Taking refuge in the Three Jewels is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to overcoming the three unfortunate states of being.

Caring is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to not destroying the root of virtuous actions.

Knowledge of the right way of acting is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to not despising others.

Knowledge of oneself is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to not praising oneself.

Knowledge of other beings is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to not blaming others.

Knowledge of the Dharma is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to zeal for the Dharma and for what agrees with the Dharma.

Knowledge of time is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to seeing what is useful.

Conquering pride is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the perfection of knowledge.

Thought free from hate and ill will is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to guarding oneself and others.

Abandonment of anger is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to not needing repentance.

Respect is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to complete absence of doubt.

Realization of what is not virtuous is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to abandoning the thought of desire.

The absence of wickedness is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to abandoning the thought of wickedness.

The absence of ignorance is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the clearing away of ignorance.

Interest in the Dharma is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to taking refuge in the meaning of the Dharma.

Desire for the Dharma is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to obtaining the light of the Dharma.

Seeking to listen to the Dharma is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the right way of realizing the Dharma.

Proper application is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to continuous perfection.

Complete knowledge of name and form is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to overcoming all attachment.

Right view is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to obtaining complete liberation through knowledge.

The abandonment of desire and hatred is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to possessing a mind free from inflation and depression.

Skillfulness in knowing the aggregates is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to knowing clearly the nature of suffering.

Even temperament is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the abandonment of all production.

Clarifying the senses is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to meditation on the path.

Patience is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the prevention of birth.

Mindfulness of the body is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to great calm in the body.

Mindfulness of feeling is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to cutting off the flow of feeling.

Mindfulness of the mind is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the realization that mind is like an illusion.

Mindfulness of the Dharma is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to awareness without obscurity.

The four complete renunciations are a luminous door of the Dharma; they lead to the abandonment of all that is unvirtuous and to the accomplishment of all that is virtuous.

The four foundations of supernatural powers are a luminous door of the Dharma; they lead to lightness of body and mind.

The power of faith is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to freedom from dependence on others.

The power of effort is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to having an extraordinary awareness.

The power of mindfulness is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the doing of good works.

The power of concentration is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the complete liberation of the mind.

The power of wisdom is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to awareness which discriminates clearly.

The strength of faith is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to overcoming the power of demons.

The strength of effort is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to freedom from backsliding.

The strength of mindfulness is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to not being deprived.

The strength of concentration is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to abandoning all conceptualization.

The strength of wisdom is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to not being controlled.

Mindfulness as a branch of awakened understanding is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to knowing the Dharma as it is.

Investigation of the Dharma as a branch of awakened understanding is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the fulfillment of all the Dharma.

Effort as a branch of awakened understanding is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to extraordinary realization.

Joy as a branch of awakened understanding is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to accomplishment in contemplation.

Very refined practice as a branch of awakened understanding is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to accomplishing what one wants to do.

Concentration as a branch of awakened understanding is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the recognition of the equality of all dharmas.

Equanimity as a branch of awakened understanding is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to indifference to all forms of birth.

Right view is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to faultlessness.

Right intention is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to abandoning all mental selectivity, conceptualization, and interpretation.

Right speech is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to understanding that a syllable or an entire discourse are the same as an echo.

Right conduct is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to not producing bad karma and to its non-maturation.

Right livelihood is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the cessation of all acquisitiveness.

Right effort is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to passing to the other shore.

Right mindfulness is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to no need for memory or fixing the mind on anything.

Right concentration is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to obtaining the concentration of an unconfused mind.

The mind of Enlightenment is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the continuation of the family of the Three Jewels.

Aspiration is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to not desiring the Lesser Vehicle.

Higher aspiration is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to high motivation in the involvement with the Buddhadharma.

Application is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the perfect fulfillment of all virtuous qualities.

The perfection of giving is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the complete purity of the principal signs, the secondary characteristics, and the Buddha-field, and to the complete maturation of beings who have been bound by greed.

The perfection of morality is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to overcoming all bad and unfortunate forms of existence, and to the complete maturation of beings who have been caught in bad behavior.

The perfection of patience is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the complete abandonment of wickedness, malice, hatred, pride, and haughtiness, and to the complete maturation of beings who have been bound by bad intentions.

The perfection of effort is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the practice of all the virtuous qualities, and to the complete maturation of beings who have been caught in indolence.

The perfection of meditation is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the birth of all superior knowledge and meditation, and to the complete maturation of beings who have been inattentive.

The perfection of wisdom is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to abandoning ignorance, the murkiness of confusion, lack of knowing, self-pity, and negativities, and to the complete maturation of beings who have been trapped by false knowledge.

Skillful means is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to attaining all the Buddhadharma and to teaching correct action in ways that attract beings to the Teachings.

The four means of conversion are a luminous door of the Dharma; they lead to the gathering of all beings to obtain Enlightenment and to understand the Dharma.

The complete maturation of beings is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to not being attached to personal well-being and to being without regret.

Upholding the holy Dharma is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads all beings to abandon completely all the fettering passions.

The accumulation of merits is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the sustenance of all beings.

The accumulation of awareness is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the fulfillment of the ten powers of a Buddha.

The accumulation of calm abiding is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to obtaining the concentration of a Tathāgata.

The accumulation of intense insight is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to obtaining the eye of wisdom.

Entrance into clear and exact knowledge is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to obtaining the eye of the Dharma.

Entrance into reliable meaning is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the pure eye of the Buddha.

Acquisition of dhāraṇī is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to retaining all the words of the Buddha.

Acquisition of brilliance is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to delighting all beings through fine discourse.

Acceptance of the correct teachings is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to bringing everything into accord with the Buddhadharma.

True acceptance is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to fulfilling the prophecy of Enlightenment.

The stage of irreversibility is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the perfection of all the Buddhadharma.

The wisdom which proceeds from stage to stage is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to initiation by the wisdom of omniscience.

The stage of initiation is a luminous door of the Dharma; it leads to the descent into the womb of a mother, to birth, to manifesting in the world, to the practice of austerities, to the journey toward Bodhimaṇḍa, to the defeat of Māra, to manifesting the Enlightenment of Buddhahood, to turning the Wheel of the Dharma, and to demonstrating the passing into Parinirvāṇa.

"There, friends, is the list of the one hundred and eight doors of the Dharma, which will always be taught to the

assembly of the gods by the Bodhisattva at the moment of the descent from Tuṣita."

O monks, when the teaching on the doors of the Dharma was given, eighty-four thousand devaputras from among the assembly of gods generated the thought of perfect, complete, and unsurpassed Enlightenment. Thirty-two thousand devaputras who had previously practiced good conduct attained the stage of pure patience, and some thirty-six million devaputras, free of defilement and lack of clarity, purified the eye of the Dharma. And the whole realm of Tuṣita was showered with petals, up to the knees.

Then, O monks, the Bodhisattva pronounced this verse for the great joy of the assembly of gods:

When the Lion Guide of Men descends from Tuṣita,
he says to the gods: "Abandon all hesitation!

"All conceivable heavenly and pleasurable situations
arise with virtue as their cause.
They are the fruit of virtuous action.

"And thus should you remember:
when you exhaust accumulations of former good works,
you will fall into the unfortunate lower realms
where pain and displeasure must be endured.

"You have heard this teaching from me;
if you think about it now with respect,
and apply yourself to its practice,
you will obtain a boundless joy.

"Desires are fleeting, unstable, without duration,
like magic, like a dream or a mirage,
unstable like lightning and foam!

"Enjoyment of the qualities of desire
brings no satisfaction,
as though one had drunk salty water.
Wise and honorable men reach true satisfaction
above the world and without defilement.

"Goddesses singing and making sweet music
are really no different from actors in a play,
from the dancer and the audience.
The relationships are similar as they join together.

"Impermanent, they move apart.
They do not follow you, as do acts of virtue;
they are not real friends, not helpful or truly close.
Therefore, act with harmony and true loving-kindness;
act in accordance with the Dharma in all you do,
and your actions will never torment you.

"True joy is found in listening to the Dharma,
in giving, moral conduct, patience, and firm conviction.
These are your best friends.
So always keep the Buddha, the Dharma,
and the Sangha in mind.

"Be always mindful and act with care.
Carefully examine the Teachings;
for all is impermanent, full of suffering, and egoless,
and all comes forth from cause and condition.
Neither body nor any other thing
belongs to anyone.

"All that you see in me—
supernatural power, knowledge, and awareness—
have meritorious deeds and study,
good conduct and care as their cause.

"Follow the way of my conduct, teaching, and prudence,
through giving, gentleness, and the acceptance of duty,
for the sake of love and help for living beings.

"Not by talking, supplication, or discourses
can the Dharma be acquired;
apply yourself and act accordingly.
Make effort with energy, and
follow the teachings of the Dharma.

"Not every action brings a gift,
but without acting, nothing is achieved.
Recall again the experience of suffering
which you felt for so long in the round of rebirth.

"If you hold what is wrong to be good,
you cannot pass beyond misery,
or gain freedom from desire.

"Therefore, with true leisure, a spiritual friend,
and a suitable place to dwell,
listen to the Dharma, and you will obtain holiness.

"You will ease the suffering which comes from desire.
Delivered from pride, conceit, and arrogance,
absorb yourself in justice, gentleness, and integrity,
as you travel the road to Nirvāṇa.

"Search zealously for the most excellent path.
With the lamp of wisdom,
clear away the darkness of ignorance.

"With the lightning bolt of knowledge,
tear open the net of error.
What more is there to say?

"If you do not apply yourself to the Dharma,
the Dharma will not yield its fruit.
I am about to obtain Enlightenment,
and I will rain down the Dharma
which leads to Immortality.

"With mind well-purified,
come hear the holy and unsurpassed Dharma!"

The Fourth Chapter
The Luminous Doors of the Dharma



Plate 5

[illegible] knowledge,
[illegible]
What more is there to say?

"If you do not apply yourself to the Dharma,
The Dharma will not yield its fruit.
I am about to obtain Enlightenment,
and I will rain down the Dharma
which leads to Immortality.

"With mind well-purified,
come hear the holy and unsurpassed Dharma!"

The Fourth Chapter
The Luminous Doors of the Dharma



Plate 5

प्रचलपरिवर्तः

།བསྐྱོད་པར་བརྩམས་པའི་ལེའུ།

Setting in Motion

O MONKS, AFTER THE BODHISATTVA had instructed the great assembly of gods with this discourse on the Dharma, after he had helped them understand clearly, had encouraged them, delighted them, and strengthened their patience, he spoke again:

"Friends, I shall go now into the land of Jambu. Formerly, when I engaged in the practice of a Bodhisattva, I invited beings to join me in four ways: by giving, by kind words, by helpfulness, and by consistency between words and deeds. How unfitting and ungrateful on my part, if now I did not become a perfect and completely enlightened Buddha!"

At this the devaputras of Tuṣita wept. Embracing the feet of the Bodhisattva, they implored him: "Noble Being, if you leave, this Tuṣita realm will lose all its glory!"

In response, the Bodhisattva replied: "The Bodhisattva Maitreya will teach you the Dharma." He placed the diadem from his own head upon the head of the Bodhisattva Maitreya and said: "Noble Being, after me you will become the perfect and completely enlightened Buddha."

In this manner, O monks, did the Bodhisattva consecrate the Bodhisattva Maitreya in the Tuṣita heaven. He then addressed himself again to the great assembly of gods: "Companions, in what form shall I enter into the womb of a mother?" Some said: "In human form." Others said: "In the form of Śakra." And others said: "In the form of Brahmā." Still others replied: "In the form of a Great King." "In the form of Vaiśravaṇa." "In the form of Rāhu." "As a gandharva, a kinnara, a mahoraga, or as Maheśvara." "In the form of Candra or Sūrya." "In the form of a garuḍa."

Then Ugratejas spoke, one of the devaputras of the Brahma realm, a ṛṣi in a previous life who in this rebirth had attained the enlightened irreversible state: "Since all this information is found in the brahmin books, in mantras, Vedas, and Śāstras, we know the Bodhisattva must enter the womb of his mother in the magnificent form of a great elephant with six tusks, covered with golden netting. His head is rosy red and his temples moist, his body beautiful and gracious. A brāhmin who knows the meaning of the Vedas and Śāstras will predict that one entering the womb in this form will be endowed with the thirty-two signs of a great being."

O monks, while the Bodhisattva was still residing in the realm of Tuṣita, he examined the time of his birth and caused eight signs to manifest at the pure abode of King Śuddhodana. What were these eight signs? First, the grounds became clear of weeds, dead tree trunks, brambles, gravel, and sand; all was well watered, filled with flowers, and swept clean of dust, dirt, and debris; all flies, wasps, mosquitos, moths, and poisonous snakes disappeared; and the grounds became smooth as the palm of the hand. This was the first precursory sign.

From the Himālayas, the king of mountains, came flocks of birds: pattraguptas, parrots, jays, cuckoos, swans, herons, peacocks, geese, kunālas, nightingales, pheasants, song birds, and birds with striped wings of many colors. They flew to the pure abode of King Śuddhodana, where they perched on the terraces and balustrades, the arches, the round windows, the galleries, and the roofs of the palace. Each bird fluttered about, full of joy, embodying this gaiety in song. This was the second precursory sign.

In all the pleasure gardens and in the parks and woods ruled by King Śuddhodana, all the flowering trees and fruit trees of different seasons suddenly came into bloom. This was the third precursory sign.

The many ponds enjoyed by King Śuddhodana were filled with thousand-petaled lotus blossoms the size of chariot wheels. This was the fourth precursory sign.

In the pure abode of King Śuddhodana, all the provisions, including clarified butter, oil, honey, sugarcane juice, and sugar, were used in abundance, and still they were not depleted. This was the fifth precursory sign.

In that excellent and pure abode, every single instrument in the women's apartments—large drums, earthen drums, and brass drums, lutes, harps, and flutes, theorbos, and cymbals, all gave forth a soft and melodious sound without being touched. This was the sixth precursory sign.

In that excellent and pure abode, the chests of gold and silver, of diamonds, pearls, and lapis lazuli, of mother-of-pearl, crystal, and coral opened of themselves, each one overflowing with shining treasure. This was the seventh precursory sign.

A perfectly clear light, brighter than sunlight or moonlight, flooded King Śuddhodana's palace, producing a deep contentment in the body and mind of everyone inside. This was the eighth precursory sign.

Māyādevī, after bathing and rubbing her body with aloes, covered her arms with bracelets and dressed herself in the finest and most beautiful of festival garments. Filled with contentment, joy, and happiness, surrounded and preceded by ten thousand attendants, she approached King Śuddhodana, who was seated at ease in the middle of the concert hall. Sitting herself down at his right on the seat of honor, which was draped with jeweled netting, she spoke to King Śuddhodana with a smile on her lips, her brow unwrinkled:

"Pray heed me, Great Lord, protector of the earth.
Grant me the favor I ask of you today.
Learn the intention which brings joy to my heart,
and rejoice with me!

"I wish to undertake, O Lord,
a practice of strict moral conduct and fasting.
For the love of all beings,
I will adhere to the eight branches of practice.
Keeping my thoughts always pure,
I will avoid harm to all beings;
as I love myself, so will I love others.

"Having put aside the much distracted mind,
I have relinquished pride and desire.
My Lord, I will no longer wastefully follow desires.

Dwelling in truth, I will lay aside all meanness,
and never utter vain or impious words opposed to virtue.

"Abandoning meanness and hatred,
confusion, pride, and malevolence,
having freed myself from all envy,
content with my fortune and acting with purity,
free from deceptive speech and without desire,
I shall walk in the path of the ten virtuous actions.

"As I will take delight in observing strict moral conduct,
pray, Lord of Men, make me not an object of desire.
May there be nothing unworthy of you.
Permit me to observe for some while
the duties of austere conduct and fasting.

"Now is it my desire, Master of Men,
to enter the highest apartments of the palace
and there where the swans roost, to recline on a couch
sweetly perfumed and strewn with flowers.

"May no eunuchs or young men attend me,
and may no strange woman remain in my presence;
but may my women friends always surround me.
May every form be pleasing
and every sound sweet and melodious.

"May those imprisoned and bound be freed;
may all the poor become rich.
During this week, for the joy of the world,
give freely of clothing, food, and drinks,
of chariots and horses for riding.

"Throughout this palace may men and women
all hold benevolent and charitable thoughts
toward each other; may there be no disputes,

no quarrels, and no harsh words.
May all enjoy themselves together
like the gods in the pleasure garden of Nandana!

"May no punishment be meted out by order of the king,
neither for the great nor for the small.
May there be no oppression and no threats or beatings.
O King, look upon all creatures as upon an only child,
with a calm mind, with kind, benevolent thoughts."

Delighted by this speech, the king replies:
"May all be according to your desire.
Whatever you wish, your every thought, I grant."

Thus commands this best of kings, instructing his followers:
"With beautiful flowers in profusion,
with perfumes and chosen scents,
decorate the summit of the most beautiful of palaces.
Arrange there parasols and streamers
and a row of tāla trees.

"Let twenty thousand courageous fighting men
armed with bows, lances, javelins, and swords,
keep watch where the voice of the swans is heard,
so that the queen may be without fear.

"May the queen ascend to the sanctuary
that is worthy of goddesses
to the sound of sweet and moving music
from thousands of divine instruments.
May she ascend like a daughter of the gods,
freshly bathed and anointed with aloes,
adorned in the most beautiful garments
and surrounded by her attendants.
May she recline like a daughter of the gods

on a beautiful couch supported by posts
inlaid with priceless jewels, and covered with flowers.

"Having removed her diadem of precious stones,
may she remain on her couch like the daughter of the gods
who went into the Miśraka garden."

Meanwhile, O monks, gods by the hundreds of thousands assembled: the Four Great Kings, Śakra the lord of the gods, the devaputras Suyāma, Santuṣita, Sunirmita, Parinirmitta Vaśvartin, Sārthavāha the son of Māra, Brahmā the master of beings, the Purohita Brahmottara , the Purohita Subrahmā, Prabhāvyūha, Ābhāsvara, Maheśvara, the gods of Śuddhāvāsa, Niṣṭhāgata, Akaniṣṭha, and many others.

"Friends, how unworthy and ungrateful we would be if we were now to leave the Bodhisattva on his own. O friends, which among us will stay with the Bodhisattva always and without ceasing—as he descends to earth, as he dwells in the womb of a mother, as he is born, as he engages in the diversions of youth, as he enjoys himself in the women's apartments, as he goes out into the world, as he practices austerities, as he approaches Bodhimaṇḍa, as he conquers Māra, as he attains perfect and complete Enlightenment of a Buddha, as he turns the Wheel of the Dharma, and until he enters into Mahāparinirvāṇa? Who is capable of serving with the thought of being useful, with an affectionate and benevolent mind, a loving mind, a sympathetic, gentle mind?" And they uttered these verses:

"Which of us can serve with constant affection
the one with the most beautiful form?
Who among us desires to greatly increase
the splendor of his merits, his strength, and fame?

"Some there must be in the palace of the gods
who wish to ceaselessly enjoy
divine pleasures with great goddesses.
Let them attach themselves to the service
of the one with a face like the stainless moon.

"Some must wish to amuse themselves
in the most beautiful and most glorious of gardens,
where the palace of the gods stands near at hand:
the garden of Miśraka, filled with flowers
and strewn with golden dust.
Let them serve the one with spotless splendor.

"Some there must be who desire
to disport themselves with goddesses
within the petals of a giant māndārava flower
as though in a great chariot.
Let them then attach themselves
to the service of the Great Being.

"Should some desire sovereignty over the Yāmya gods,
or desire to be lord of Tuṣita,
worthy of the homage of the entire world,
let them attach themselves to the service
of the one whose glory is infinite.

"Some may desire to delight in all the pleasures possible
in the city of the Nirmita gods

or the realm of the gods of Vaśavartin.
Let them attach themselves to the service
of the one who possesses the highest virtues.

"He is Master of Māra, his mind without hostility.
He has reached the limit of supernatural abilities.
Absolute master of desire, he has far surpassed all power.
Should you desire such power,
go with the one who is always there to aid.

"Whoever wishes to pass beyond the realm of desire,
and to live in the city of Brahmā,
let him serve the Great Being
who shines with the four immeasurables.

"Whoever has in mind a great kingdom,
the vast and excellent realm of a Cakravartin,
let him attach himself to the service
of the jewel mine rich in abundant merit,
who offers security and well-being.

"Whoever wishes to be lord of the earth,
or a great and rich merchant followed by many,
or a commander of great armies,
let him go with the one always ready to aid.

"Whoever desires beauty and power,
glory, fame, and strength,
or desires to be a great orator
whose speeches will be long remembered,
let him draw near the Learned One
who has the voice of Brahmā.

"Whoever desires fulfillment of divine and human desires,
or wishes for all the happiness found in the three worlds,
and the joy of contemplation;

whoever wishes happiness in solitude,
let him attach himself to the service
of the Lord of the Dharma.

"Whoever desires to abandon attachment and hatred,
whoever desires to clear away the fettering passions,
let him go promptly into the presence of the one
whose mind is calm, very calm, supremely calm,
whose mind is perfectly controlled.

"May learners and those finished learning,
as well as Pratyekabuddhas,
seek out the sage who is an ocean of virtues.
Roaring like a lion with the ten strengths,
they will obtain the knowledge of the Omniscient One.

"Whoever wishes to travel the eightfold path,
whoever desires to destroy the path to lower states of being,
and to open the road of immortality;
whoever desires to walk in goodness,
let him serve the one who puts an end
to traveling the road of rebirth.

"Whoever desires to honor the Sugata,
to listen to the Dharma from the Compassionate One;
whoever desires to obtain the qualities of the Sangha,
let him go into the presence of this Ocean of Virtues.

"Whoever desires the destruction
of birth, old age, and death,
wishing to free himself from the bonds of rebirth,
let him attach himself to this being,
pure as the perfectly clear sky.

"Whoever wishes to free himself and others,
desiring the best signs and virtues
and the beauty which wins the hearts of all,
let him come before the Skillful One.

"The sage who desires
good conduct, contemplation, and wisdom,
who desires deliverance, so profound and difficult to probe,
let him go promptly before the King of Physicians.

"Whoever desires all these many qualities,
which carry one away
from both the misery and the joy of existence,
let him seek out the sage who has become a siddha."

Having heard this discourse, the gods assembled in the east, in the south, in the west, and in the north: a hundred and eighty-four thousand gods from the realm of the Four Great Kings, a hundred thousand gods from the realm of the Thirty-three, a hundred thousand gods of the Yāma realm, a hundred thousand gods of the Tuṣita realm, a hundred thousand Nirmāṇarati gods, a hundred thousand Parinirmita vaśavartin gods, sixty thousand gods of Māra's realm born in this state through the effect of their former merits, sixty-eight thousand gods of the Brahma realm, and several hundreds of thousands of other gods, including Akaniṣṭhas, and thousands upon thousands of devaputras. And the most illustrious of the devaputras addressed these verses to this great assembly of gods:

"Pray, listen, Lords, to our present decision.
We will give up the riches and joys of desire
and the supreme happiness of contemplation,
and attach ourselves instead
to this pure and excellent being.

"At the moment when he descends
into the womb of a mother
and during the time he remains there,
we will give homage to the one who is worthy of homage,
and guard carefully the one well-guarded by good works,
the one never touched by corruption.

"With songs and concerts and sweet melodies,
we will celebrate the perfections and the virtues
of the Ocean of Virtues.
Whoever hears us will generate
the Thought of Enlightenment,
and all heaven and earth will rejoice.

"We will fill the king's palace with flowers
perfumed by the sweet smoke of dark aloes,
which delivers gods and men from fever and sickness.

"With fresh and brilliant māndārava, pārijāta,
candra, sucandra, and sphāra flowers
will we fill the city called Kapila,
to honor the one who comes forth
through the merit of his previous actions.

"From the time he abides in the womb of his mother,
unsoiled by the three defilements,
until he is born to put an end to old age and death,

we will give homage to the one of great understanding,
and serve him faithfully.

"After his birth, he will take seven steps.
Śakra and Brahmā will take him in their arms,
and bathe this pure being in scented water.
The gods and men who see this
will obtain great benefits.

"For so long as he leads a worldly life,
residing in the women's apartments
and conquering the fetters of desire,
until he abandons the life of royalty,
we will serve him faithfully.

"From the time he approaches Bodhimaṇḍa
and gathers up sweet rushes
until he achieves Enlightenment;
from the time he overcomes the demon Māra
until he is asked by hundreds of thousands of Brahmās
to turn the Wheel of the Dharma,
we will give homage to the Sugata.

"For so long as he performs the work of a Buddha,
training hundreds of millions of beings
in the three thousand worlds,
preparing them for Immortality,
until he passes into the cool tranquility of Nirvāṇa,
until then, none of us will leave the Ṛṣi in his great glory!"

O monks, the daughters of the gods of the realm of desire, having seen the perfection of the body of the Bodhisattva,

wondered: "Who will the young woman be who shall carry in her womb this being pure and fine above all others?" Filled with curiosity, they gathered up the finest incense and flowers, garlands and ointments, lamps, perfumed powders, and raiments. Blessed by the maturity of good works and endowed with divine bodies and minds, they disappeared in an instant from the palace of the gods and entered the city of Kapila, the most beautiful of cities, the city of a hundred thousand gardens.

Shining with the splendid merit of stainless virtue, wearing diaphanous garments and row upon row of jeweled bracelets, the goddesses entered the swan-filled palace grounds of King Śuddhodana. In the large palace fit for the master of the gods, they spied Queen Māyādevī resting on her couch. Remaining suspended in the middle of the sky, they pointed her out and spoke to each other in these verses:

"When we who live in the city of the long-lived gods
saw the ravishing beauty of the Bodhisattva,
we wondered: who shall be his mother?

"Bearing flowers, garlands, and ointments,
wearing graceful garments, bowing with respect,
we have entered the dwelling of the Master of Men
to satisfy our curiosity.

"Seeing Queen Māyā resting on her couch,
we point at her and exclaim:
look well upon this beautiful mortal!

"Proud and self-satisfied, we have thought
that our beauty most ravished the heart.
But looking upon the wife of the lord of men,
we see our divine splendor eclipsed!

"Endowed with great virtues, wholly worthy is she
to be the mother of the greatest of men.
As a precious jewel is placed inside a beautiful vase,
so will this queen be the vase for the god of gods!

"From the palms of her hands to the soles of her feet,
her face and her body are exquisite, more than divine.
Indeed, we cannot gaze upon her long enough,
for she brings increasing joy to heart and mind.

"Like the moon in the sky glows her beautiful face;
like the light from the sun her body shines;
her beauty sparkles like a nugget of pure gold.
She has perfumed curls like the large black bee,
eyes like lotus petals, teeth like the stars in the heavens.

"Her small waist is curved like a bow,
her hips are rounded and meet her waist smoothly;
her thighs and legs are as shapely
as the trunk of an elephant; her knees are well-formed.

"The palms of her hands
and the soles of her feet are smooth and pink;
clearly she could only be the daughter of the gods."

Having thus gazed upon the queen from all directions,
they toss flowers and circumambulate
three times around her,
praising the glorious mother of the Victorious One,
and return the next moment to the city of the gods.

Then the Four Guardians of the four directions,
along with Śākra, Suyāma, Nirmita, the troops of the gods,
the kumbhāṇḍas, the rākṣasas, the asuras,
the mahoragas, and the kinnaras say:

"Proceed before the Highest of Men;
guard and protect him;
but take no offense at living beings;
do nothing harmful to any being.

"There in the best of abodes,
where Māyādevī abides together with her retinue,
take up bows and arrows, javelins and swords,
and remaining in the broad expanse of heaven,
watch with attention."

The devaputras know the time
of the Bodhisattva's descent from Tuṣita;
entering the presence of Māyā,
carrying flowers and balsam,
with joyous minds, they join their palms
and bowing respectfully before her say:

"It is time for the Lion to descend!
Take birth, most powerful of men!
Out of sympathy and compassion for the world,
listen to our prayer for the gift of the Dharma."

O monks, at the time of the descent of the Bodhisattva, several hundreds of thousands of Bodhisattvas who dwelt in

Tuṣita and had but one birth remaining came from the east to honor him. From each of the other directions, several hundreds of thousands of Bodhisattvas who dwelled in Tuṣita and had but one birth remaining also came to honor him.

From the realm of the Four Great Kings, hundreds of thousands of goddesses took up instruments and sang sweet songs in honor of the Bodhisattva. From the realm of the Thirty-three gods, from the Yāma, Tuṣita, Nirmāṇarati, and Parinirmita vaśavartin realms, eighty-four thousand goddesses singing and playing instruments of all sorts went before the Bodhisattva to praise him.

The Bodhisattva was seated on the Śrīgarbha throne in the storied palace produced by his great merit. Now, in the sight of all the gods and nāgas, and accompanied by hundreds of millions of Bodhisattvas, gods, nāgas, and yakṣas, the Bodhisattva began his departure from the Tuṣita realm.

O monks, the departing Bodhisattva projected from his body a light surpassing divine light, a light so great that three thousand great thousands of worlds were filled completely with light. Abundant light! Light which had never before been seen extended everywhere. Neither sun nor moon, for all their strength and power, has the magnitude or strength, the color or glory to illuminate what is wrapped in the darkness of sin; nor can they illuminate the places plunged in obscurity. Beings in such places can never even see their own outstretched arms. But now a great and majestic light enveloped them, so that they saw each other perfectly and recognized each other: "So! Other beings have been born here too!"

For a moment, the three million world-realms were strongly shaken by six phenomena and eighteen great signs; worlds

Here today is the fruit of that effort:
your body shines like Mount Meru.

"For several tens of millions of kalpas,
you engaged in contemplation
to purify the fettering passions.
Here today is the fruit of that contemplation:
beings are no longer tormented by the harmful emotions.

"For several tens of millions of kalpas,
you meditated on the wisdom
which destroys the fettering passions.
Here today is the fruit of that wisdom:
the clear light which shines unequaled.

"Dressed in the armor of love
which destroys the fettering passions,
you have obtained supreme joy and equanimity;
you have become pure out of compassion for all beings.
O Sugata, homage to you!

"Exalted by the splendor of the light from the lamp
of wisdom that clears away darkness and folly,
you are the eye that leads three thousand worlds,
the one who shows the path.
O Muni, homage to you!

"Skilled in the knowledge
of the foundations of supernatural power,
you see the truth and have learned the meaning of purity;
having crossed over, you free other beings.
O Sugata, the deliverer, homage to you!

"Practiced in all knowledge and in skillful means,
you who will change no more

manifest a change in form;
unattached to the world,
you yet conform to its customs.

"For whoever sees or hears you,
supreme, unimaginable benefit is obtained;
whoever hears from you the Dharma
and has faith is filled with abundant joy.

"Somber now is the whole Tuṣita realm,
but the sun has risen in the land of Jambu;
its light will awaken innumerable beings
from the sleep of harmful obsessive emotions.

"Crowded today is the great and prosperous city,
filled with hundreds of thousands of gods;
and in the palace, hosts of goddesses
play sweet music on their instruments.

"The queen of virtuous action is endowed
with great beauty, and her son is perfect;
she is filled with the splendor of merits,
while his glory shines with majesty in the three worlds.

"Henceforth in the palace, no more passionate disputes
and no quarrels will break out;
the love and majesty of the greatest of beings
makes all minds kind and reverent.

"Issuing from the race of Cakravartin kings,
the king's lineage grows strong.
The city called Kapila, greatly prospering,
shall be filled with a treasure of precious things.

"For the yakṣas, the rākṣasas, the kumbhāṇḍas,
the troops of the gods and dānavas,

and those of Indra who follow,
for those who stand ready to guard the greatest of men,
deliverance soon will come.

"Having praised the guide possessing such merits,
the one so worthy of love and respect,
we will all soon be ready for supreme Enlightenment.
In this we shall follow you, most eminent of men!"

The Fifth Chapter
Setting in Motion



Plate 6



Plate 6

गर्भावक्रान्तिपरिवर्तः

།ལྷུམས་སུ་འཇུག་པའི་ལེའུ།

The Descent into the Womb

SO MONKS, THE COLD WEATHER HAD PASSED, and spring had arrived—springtime, the most beautiful of all the seasons, when the new leaves decorate the trees and the earth is covered with flowers. Soft green grass carpeted the earth, the air was neither too cold nor too hot, and neither fog nor dust tainted the breeze. It was the month of Vaiśākha, when the constellation Viśakha returns.

The Bodhisattva, the Lord of the three worlds, revered by all the world, saw that the right time had arrived. Just at the appropriate moment, on the fifteenth of the month when the moon was full and in conjunction with the constellation Puṣya, the Bodhisattva descended from the Tuṣita realm, and, retaining full memory and knowledge, entered the womb of his mother, who had devoted herself to spiritual practices.

Through her right side he entered in the form of a small, white elephant with six tusks, his head the color of cochineal, his tusks of gold, his limbs and organs all without imperfection. And having entered the womb, he remained on her right side, never moving to the left. Māyādevī, sleeping softly on her couch, saw this in a dream:

गर्भावक्रान्तिपरिवर्तः

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An elephant entered her womb. White as snow or silver,
with six perfect tusks, and beautiful feet,
a finely wrought trunk, and a rosy head;
the most beautiful of elephants, with graceful gait,
and a body immutable as a diamond.

Completely absorbed in contemplation,
never had she felt such happiness;
never had she known such pleasure
both in body and in mind.

As Māyādevī arose from her couch and adorned herself with ornaments and suitable attire, the deep delight and well-being of the dream remained. Surrounded and preceded by her women attendants, she descended from the upper apartments of the most beautiful of palaces and went into the aśoka wood. Seated in the garden of the wood, she sent a message to King Śuddhodana: "May the king please attend: the queen desires to see him."

Hearing these words, King Śuddhodana rose from his throne, filled with joy. Surrounded and preceded by his ministers and advisers, accompanied by his retinue and relatives, he hastened toward the aśoka wood. But once there, he suddenly felt very heavy and found he could not enter. At the gate of the aśoka wood he reflected, reciting this verse:

"I cannot ever remember feeling as heavy as I feel today;
not even when I rode to battle at the head of brave men.
I cannot even enter my own family's dwelling!
What is happening to me? Who would know?"

At these words the devaputras of the Śuddhāvāsa realm revealed the upper half of their bodies, and from the sky addressed these verses to King Śuddhodana:

"The great Bodhisattva has descended from Tuṣita heaven:
rich with austerities, spiritual practice, and virtue,
worthy of the homage of the three thousand worlds;
his love and compassion
are consecrated by good works and knowledge.
O Great King, he has entered
the womb of Māyādevī as your son."

Joining his palms and bowing his head,
the king entered the wood
and gazed on Māyā, full of respect.
Putting aside pride and haughtiness he said:
"What may I do for you?
What is it you wish? Please tell me."

The queen replied:
"White as snow or silver,
surpassing the sun and moon,

the greatest of elephants
with beautiful, shapely feet and six great tusks,
with diamond-like joints,
magnificent and surpassingly beautiful,
has entered my womb. Listen to the story.

"In a dream I saw, not vaguely but distinctly,
the three thousand worlds and millions of gods,
praising me as I slept.
My mind was clear and at peace;
free of anger, confusion, and hatred,
I knew the happiness of contemplation.

"It would be good, O Master of Men,
quickly to call the brāhmins,
those clever in explaining the Vedas and dreams,
those who know astrology.
They can say if this dream of mine reflects the truth;
and whether it portends happiness
or unhappiness for our family."

Instantly the king summoned the learned brāhmins,
who know the Vedas and the reading of the sacred texts,
and Māyā said again: "Listen to my dream."

The brāhmins replied: "Please tell us,
O Queen, what you have seen in your dream,
and we will tell you what it means."

And so the queen related:
"White as snow or silver,
surpassing the sun and the moon,
the greatest of elephants,
with beautiful, shapely feet

and six great tusks, with diamond-like joints,
magnificent and surpassingly beautiful,
has entered into my womb."

The brāhmins then predicted:
"You will obtain a great joy;
there is no sign of unhappiness
for your family in this dream.
A son will be born to you, his body adorned with signs,
a noble descendant of a race of kings,
a magnanimous Cakravartin.

"If he abandons love, royalty, and home,
departing to wander as a monk,
free from attachment, out of compassion for all the worlds,
he will become a Buddha,
worthy of the offerings of the three worlds.
With the excellent nectar of immortality,
he will satisfy all beings."

Having made this auspicious prediction,
the brāhmins took food in the palace;
after receiving many gifts,
they departed.

O monks, as soon as King Śuddhodana heard the reply of the brāhmins who know signs and omens, who are clever in astrology and in the explanation of dreams, he was filled with contentment and pleasure, with joy and delight. To satisfy the brāhmins, he served them delicate dishes, well-prepared and savory, and before bidding them farewell, presented them with many gifts.

At the same time, throughout Kapilavastu, at the four gates of the city, at all the crossroads and public squares, he ordered alms distributed, with the thought of doing homage to the Bodhisattva. He gave food to those who wished food; drink to those who wished drink; clothing to those who wished clothing; carts to those who wished carts; he gave perfumes, garlands, ointments, perfumed powders, couches, shelters, and means of subsistence according to each one's desire.

Then, O monks, the thought occurred to King Śuddhodana: where can Māyādevī stay pleasantly and without disturbance? At that instant, the Four Great Kings of the gods approached King Śuddhodana and spoke to him: "Do not trouble yourself, O King; remain at ease. We will prepare a palace for the Bodhisattva."

Then Śakra, the master of the gods,
approached King Śuddhodana and said:

"The palace prepared by the Four Great Kings
is a very poor place.
That of the Thirty-three gods is far better;
I shall give the Bodhisattva an abode like Vaijayanta."

Then the devaputra Suyāma
approached King Śuddhodana and said:

"Seeing my palace, ten million Śakras
were filled with admiration;
this fortunate abode of Suyāma
do I give to the Bodhisattva."

Then the devaputra Santuṣita
approached King Śuddhodana and said:

"The abode of the very glorious one
when he lived in the Tuṣita realm;
this do I give to the Bodhisattva."

Then the devaputra Sunirmita
approached King Śuddhodana and said:

"A happy dwelling, like a jewel, a realized dream;
this shall I give to the Bodhisattva as homage."

Then a devaputra of the Parinirmita vaśavartin realm
approached King Śuddhodana and said:

"All these dwellings, such as they are,
belong to the desire realm;
however beautiful, they are completely eclipsed
by the splendors of my dwelling.

"I offer this fortunate dwelling,
formed of precious and splendid things,
as homage to the Bodhisattva.
I shall bring it, O King.

"It is filled with heavenly flowers
and scented with divine perfumes.
It is a spacious palace where the queen can live."

In this way, O monks, in the great city of Kapila, each of the powerful gods of the desire realm offered a dwelling as homage to the Bodhisattva. King Śuddhodana also prepared a dwelling, one which surpassed those of men, though

it did not equal that of the gods. And through the power of the Bodhisattva's great contemplation, Māyādevī appeared to reside in each one of the dwellings.

During the time the Bodhisattva lived in the womb of his mother, he remained on the right side, seated with his legs crossed. And each of the most powerful gods knew clearly that it was indeed in his own palace that the mother of the Bodhisattva lived, and not elsewhere.

Concerning this it is said:

While the Bodhisattva remained
in the great state of contemplation,
through the incomprehensible manifestations
of his supernatural power,
all the gods have had their intentions fulfilled;
even the desire of the king has come to pass.

Then some of the devaputras in that assembly of gods considered: any devaputra from the realm of the Four Great Kings would withdraw in disgust from the foul-smelling human body, and those gods higher than they, such as the Thirty-three gods or the Yāmas or the gods of Tuṣita, would be even more repelled. How then could the Bodhisattva, raised above all the worlds, pure and free from any disagreeable odor, the pearl of beings, descended from Santuṣita,

the realm of the gods, how could he remain in a human body with its foul odor; how could he remain for ten lunar months in the womb of a mother?

At this point in the Buddha's discourse, Ānanda, through the power of the Buddha, spoke thus to the Bhagavat: "It is astonishing, O Bhagavat, how base is the body of woman, as the Tathāgata has said, and how subject to passion. But this, Bhagavat, is still more astonishing—that the Bhagavat, who as a Bodhisattva had been raised above all the worlds, descended from the divine realm of Tuṣita into a human body with its disagreeable odor, and dwelt within the right side of the womb of his mother. I cannot explain it!"

The Bhagavat said: "Do you wish, Ānanda, to see the Ratnavyūha, the jeweled sanctum in which the Bodhisattva dwelt when he entered the womb of his mother?"

Ānanda said: "This is surely the time, Bhagavat! This is surely the right moment, Sugata! May the Tathāgata show us the jeweled sanctum of the Bodhisattva! How we would rejoice to see it!"

The Bhagavat made a sign, and Brahmā, the lord of the Sahā worlds, came at once to stand in the presence of the Bhagavat, accompanied by sixty-eight hundred thousand gods of the Brahma realm. He bowed his head to the feet of the Bhagavat and circumambulated him three times; with palms joined, he bowed again and stood to one side.

Then the Bhagavat spoke to Brahmā, the lord of the Sahā worlds: "Brahmā, previously you carried away the jeweled sanctum in which I resided for ten months as a Bodhisattva in the womb of my mother." And Brahmā replied: "It is so, Bhagavat; it is so, Sugata." "Where is this

sanctum now, O Brahmā? Show it to me." And Brahmā replied: "It is in the Brahma realm." The Bhagavat at once requested Brahmā to show him the Ratnavyūha, the sanctum of the Bodhisattva where the Bodhisattva had dwelt for ten months, so that its manner of construction could be made known.

Then Brahmā, the lord of the Sahā worlds, said to the Brahma gods: "May your lordships remain until I return with the sanctum of the Bodhisattva." Bowing with his head to the feet of the Bhagavat, the lord of the Sahā worlds disappeared from his presence, reappearing in the same instant in the Brahma realm. There Brahmā said to the devaputra Subrahmā: "Friend, hasten from the world of Brahmā to the realm of the Thirty-three gods; raise your voice and let this word be heard—we will carry the Ratnavyūha, the sanctum of the Bodhisattva, into the presence of the Tathāgata. Let whoever desires to see it approach quickly!"

Then Brahmā, lord of the Sahā worlds, together with eighty-four hundreds of thousands of niyutas of koṭis of gods, took up the Ratnavyūha, the sanctum of the Bodhisattva, and placed it in a palace of Brahmā three hundred yojanas in breadth. Surrounded on all sides by these hundreds of thousands of niyutas of koṭis of gods, he descended with the sanctum into the world.

And at that moment, the gods of the desire realm who wished to serve the Bhagavat gathered in great number. They covered the Ratnavyūha with the cloth of the gods and adorned it with garlands, divine incense, and flowers. Heavenly music sounded, and divine amusements were displayed, while gods renowned for their great power surrounded the sanctum.

Śakra, the master of the gods, standing at a great distance on the great mountain Sumeru in the middle of the ocean, put his hand up to shade his face. He bent his head to one side and blinked his eyes, for he could see nothing. And why not? Now the Brahma gods are renowned for their great power; the Thirty-three gods, the Yāmas, the Nirmāṇaratis, and the Parinirmita vaśavartins are lower. If Śakra, the master of the gods, was confused, how much more so these others?

Then the Bhagavat caused the music of the gods to stop, because on hearing it, the men of the land of Jambu would go mad.

The Four Great Kings of the gods sought out Śakra, the master of the gods, and spoke to him: "Lord of the gods, how can it be that we can not see the jeweled sanctum of the Bodhisattva?"

And Śakra replied: "Friends, like you, I myself cannot see it. But nevertheless, friends, when it is brought into the presence of the Bhagavat, we will see it." And they replied: "Lord of the gods, let us do whatever is necessary to see it; let us do it as quickly as we can!"

Śakra said to them: "Friends, let us wait until the most eminent of most eminent devaputras delight the Bhagavat with their speeches." Consequently, they stood to one side and gazed upon the Bhagavat.

Now Brahmā, lord of the Sahā worlds, together with eighty-four hundreds of thousands of niyutas of koṭis of gods in attendance, carried the Ratnavyūha, the sanctum of the Bodhisattva, to offer it to the Tathāgata.

The jeweled sanctum of the Bodhisattva was shining, its fine proportions wonderful to behold. It was four-sided in

shape and rested on four pillars. The top tier was the height of a six-month-old child, and in the middle of this tier was a throne of proper size for a child six months old.

In color and form there is nothing like the jeweled sanctum of the Bodhisattva in all the worlds, including the worlds of the gods, the Brahma gods, and the demons. At the sight of it, the gods were lost in admiration; their eyes were dazzled. Carried into the presence of the Tathāgata, the sanctum was shining, glowing, and resplendent. Just as gold, melted by a skilled workman and refined into complete purity, is free from every flaw and stain, so the tier of the Ratnavyūha was shining now like pure gold. And the throne, O monks, prepared for the Bodhisattva in this tier of the sanctum, could be compared with nothing in all the worlds of gods and men, except perhaps to the beautiful neck of the Bodhisattva, the color and shape of which is similar to a conch shell. In its presence the magnificent garment of the great Brahmā could no longer be seen, just like the skin of a black gazelle, when beaten by the wind and rain. This tier is made of the essence of Uraga sandalwood. So permeated is it with the essence of sandalwood that a single grain of its dust is equal to the value of a thousand worlds.

A second tier exactly like the other stands freely in the bottom tier. In the second tier is a third tier, exactly like it, and in this third tier of sandalwood is found the throne, the color of lapis lazuli, well-placed and well-sheltered. Covering this tier of sandalwood is every kind of heavenly flower, surpassing all earthly flowers, produced through the maturation of the previous merits of the Bodhisattva.

Solid and indestructible as a diamond is the jeweled sanctum of the Bodhisattva, the Ratnavyūha, and yet soft

to the touch as a garment of kācalindi cloth. And within the Ratnavyūha is displayed everything to be found in the realms of desire.

On the night the Bodhisattva entered into his mother's womb, from the great depth of the sea, from a depth of sixty-eight million yojanas, a lotus rose up to the world of Brahmā, seen only by the holy Cakravartin, the Best of Men, and by the great Brahmā, commander of millions of beings. Gathered in the great lotus in the form of a drop of nectar was the essence, the quintessence, of the elementary substances of the three thousand great thousands of worlds. Placing this drop into a shining vase of lapis lazuli, the great Brahmā presented it to the Bodhisattva. Out of mercy toward the great Brahmā, the Bodhisattva took the vessel and drank from it. Except for a Bodhisattva who is in his last existence, and who has accomplished all the stages of a Bodhisattva, there is no being among all the multitudes of beings who can digest such a drop of elixir.

Through the maturation of what actions was this drop of elixir the lot of the Bodhisattva? During the ages when the Bodhisattva was practicing, he had given medicines to the sick, he had filled beings with hope, he had satisfied their hearts' desires, he had given refuge to all who needed refuge. Always he gave the first flowers, the first fruits, the first taste of dishes to the Tathāgata, to the caityas of the Tathāgatas, to the assemblies of Śrāvakas, to his parents; it was only later that he enjoyed anything himself. With the maturing of such actions, the great Brahmā offers this drop of nectar to the Bodhisattva.

Upon this tier of the Ratnavyūha appears all that is best, all joyful things and strings of garlands, all appearing

through the complete maturation of the previous actions of the Bodhisattva.

In the Ratnavyūha, the sanctum of the Bodhisattva, there also appeared an assortment of cloth which was called the Śatasahasravyūha, Array of a Hundred Thousand. For no being among the multitudes of beings could such cloth be produced, save only for a Bodhisattva who is in his last existence.

All that was most pure in form, sound, odor, taste, and touch was found on this tier. So perfect was its quality that both the inside and the outside of the sanctum were as soft to the touch as a garment of kācalindi cloth. Once it was seen, nothing anywhere could compare with this tier of the Ratnavyūha.

And thus do the Bodhisattva's intentions, expressed in his previous prayers, come to pass; it is certain that the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva will be born into the world of men; after leaving his home and becoming a perfect and complete Buddha, he will turn the Wheel of the Dharma.

The Ratnavyūha manifests on the right side of his mother's womb where the Bodhisattva makes his entry, and here the Bodhisattva, having descended from the Tuṣita heaven, remains seated with his legs crossed—this is because the Bodhisattva in his last existence does not appear as a weak and lifeless embryo, but is endowed with limbs fully formed and also with the signs of a great man. And so the mother of the Bodhisattva, Māyādevī, saw the most excellent of great elephants coming to her in a dream.

Śakra and the Four Great Kings, the twenty-eight chiefs of the army of the yakṣas, and Guhyakādhipati, from the

family of yakṣas known as Vajrapāṇi, having learned that the Bodhisattva had entered the womb of his mother, placed themselves always and ceaselessly at his service. Four goddesses also appeared to serve the Bodhisattva: Utkhalī, Sumutkhalī, Dhvajavatī, and Prabhāvatī. Learning that the Bodhisattva had entered the womb of a mother, they guarded him always and ceaselessly. Śakra also, the lord of the gods, with devaputras numbering five hundred, on learning that the Bodhisattva had entered the womb of a mother, served him always and ceaselessly.

The body of the Bodhisattva who has entered into the womb of his mother is like a great mass of fire on the summit of a mountain on a dark and gloomy night, visible from the distance of a yojana, visible even from five yojanas. So did the Bodhisattva manifest at the time that he entered the womb of his mother: luminous, glorious, gracious, beautiful to see, seated with his legs crossed within the tier of the Ratnavyūha, he shone like pure gold inlaid with lapis lazuli. And the mother of the Bodhisattva could see him enter her womb: like a lightning flash from a great mass of clouds. Radiating great light, the Bodhisattva entered the womb of his mother—with majesty, great brilliance, splendor, and color, illuminating the first tier of jewels completely. After illuminating the first tier and the second tier, he lit up the third tier of perfumes and jewels. After illuminating the third tier, he illumined the entire body of his mother. After illuminating the body of his mother, he lit up the throne on which he was seated; after lighting up the throne, he lit up the whole palace. When the whole palace was bathed in brilliance, the light illumined the regions of the east, the south, the west, and the north, the zenith and the nadir: each of the ten directions, up to the distance of a

krośa. Thus did the Bodhisattva enter the womb of his mother, illuminating everything with majesty, splendor, and color.

O monks, early in the morning, there arrived the Four Great Kings along with the twenty-eight great chiefs of the army of yakṣas and five hundred other yakṣas in order to see the Bodhisattva, to praise him, to serve him, and to hear the Dharma. As they arrived, the Bodhisattva extended his right hand, pointing out their seats. Sitting down upon the seats prepared for them, these guardians of the world and the others saw the Bodhisattva in the womb of his mother, his body like gold, moving his hand, waving it, gesturing. And filled with joy, delight, and well-being, they paid homage to the Bodhisattva.

Once they were seated, the Bodhisattva instructed them with a discourse on the Dharma; he helped them to grasp it, encouraged them, and filled them with joy. And when they desired to depart, the Bodhisattva, knowing their thought, signaled their departure by stretching out his right hand, stretching it out and withdrawing it without hurting his mother.

The Four Great Kings realized that their desire had been foreseen, and that the Bodhisattva had dismissed them. Circumambulating the Bodhisattva and his mother three times, they withdrew.

These are the causes, and these are the circumstances of the Bodhisattva extending his right hand and then withdrawing it, during the calm night when all were sleeping. And having withdrawn his hand, he held himself still, with great mindfulness and knowledge.

Whenever men or women, youths or maidens, approached to see the Bodhisattva, they all were filled with joy, first by the Bodhisattva and then by his mother. O monks, during the time the Bodhisattva dwelt in the womb of his mother, he gave pleasure to all beings. No being, god, nāga, or yakṣa, human or non-human, could first bring pleasure to the Bodhisattva; it was the Bodhisattva who first brought delight to them, and then it was the mother of the Bodhisattva who filled them with joy.

The morning having passed and the noon hour having arrived, Śakra, lord of the gods, together with the most eminent of most eminent devaputras of the realm of the Thirty-three gods, all approached the Bodhisattva in order to pay homage to him, to serve him, and to hear the Dharma. The Bodhisattva, seeing them coming from afar, stretched out his right arm, the color of gold, and gestured to their seats. By doing so, he filled Śakra, master of the gods, and the Thirty-three gods with such joy that not even Śakra could decline the invitation of the Bodhisattva; he sat down, along with the other devaputras, on the seats prepared for them.

Once they were seated, the Bodhisattva instructed them with a discourse on the Dharma; he helped them to understand it, encouraged them, and filled them with joy. And even the mother of the Bodhisattva turned to the side where the Bodhisattva was extending his hand.

To each of the gods it seemed that the Bodhisattva was conversing pleasantly with him. Each one said to himself: "It is with me that the Bodhisattva is speaking; it is with me alone that he is conversing so joyously!" Moreover, on that tier of the Ratnavyūha were seen the reflected images of

Indra and the Thirty-three gods: certainly there is nowhere any domain of a Bodhisattva like that of the Bodhisattva who has entered into the womb of his mother!

And monks, when Śakra, the master of the gods, and the other devaputras wished to depart, the Bodhisattva, knowing their thought by thought alone, gestured with his right hand and then withdrew it. Yet with great mindfulness and knowledge, he did not hurt his mother.

Śakra, lord of the gods, and the other Thirty-three gods realized that their desire had been foreseen, and that they were dismissed by the Bodhisattva. Circumambulating the Bodhisattva and his mother three times, they withdrew.

Noon had passed, O monks, and it was afternoon. Brahmā, lord of the Sahā worlds, surrounded and preceded by several hundreds of thousands of devaputras, approached the Bodhisattva bearing the divine drop of elixir. He came in order to pay his respects, to give homage to him, to serve him, and to hear the Dharma.

O monks, realizing that Brahmā, lord of the Sahā worlds, was approaching with his following, the Bodhisattva again stretched out his golden right hand. He filled the gods with joy by his words and gestured to their seats. And it was impossible, O monks, for Brahmā to decline the invitation of the Bodhisattva. O monks, Brahmā seated himself with the devaputras of the Brahma realm on the seats which had been prepared for them. As soon as they were seated, the Bodhisattva instructed them with discourses on the Dharma; he helped them to understand, encouraged them, and filled them with joy. And Māyādevī had again turned toward the side where the Bodhisattva was extending his right hand.

Once more each of the gods had the thought that it was with himself alone that the Bodhisattva conversed so pleasantly.

When Brahmā, lord of the Sahā worlds, and the other devaputras of the Brahma realm desired to depart, the Bodhisattva, knowing by his thought the content of their thought, extended his golden right arm and then withdrew it. But this signal to depart did not hurt his mother.

Brahmā, lord of worlds, and the other devaputras of the Brahma realm realized that their desire to depart had been foreseen. Knowing that they had been dismissed, they circumambulated the Bodhisattva and his mother three times and departed. Again the Bodhisattva with great mindfulness held his hand motionless.

And then, O monks, from the east, from the south, from the west, from the north, from the zenith, from the nadir, from every one of the ten directions, hundreds of thousands of Bodhisattvas came to see the Bodhisattva, to pay him homage, to serve him, to hear the Dharma, and to sing the praise of the Dharma. While they were arriving, rays of light streamed forth from the body of the Bodhisattva and became thrones, and on these thrones the Bodhisattvas seated themselves. As soon as they were seated, the Bodhisattva discoursed with them on the development of the Great Vehicle. And no one saw this except the devaputras who shared the same destiny. These are the causes, these are the circumstances of the light streaming forth from the Bodhisattva's body during the calm night when all were sleeping.

O monks, during the time that the Bodhisattva dwelt in her womb, Māyādevī felt no heaviness in her body; she felt instead lightness, well-being, and pleasure, and no internal

pain at all. She was afflicted neither with the suffering of desire, nor the suffering of hatred, nor the suffering of ignorance. Her mind held no thought of desire, malevolence, or harmfulness.

Māyādevī experienced neither cold nor heat, neither hunger nor thirst, neither gloominess nor strain; she knew nothing of weariness. No unpleasant form, sound, odor, or touch was presented to her; she had no bad dreams. She was not subject to feminine coquetry, trickery, or envy, or to the natural feminine passions. The mother of the Bodhisattva devoted herself to the five rules of discipline; her conduct was moral and was strengthened by the ten virtuous actions. And never did the mother of the Bodhisattva have the thought of desire for any man; nor could any man feel desire for the mother of the Bodhisattva.

And during this time, any one—woman or man, youth or maiden—whose mind was possessed by another, whether by god or nāga, yakṣa, gandharva, asura, garuḍa, or bhūta, either in the great city of Kapila or in other lands, had only to look on the mother of the Bodhisattva to regain possession of his senses.

And likewise, those who were not human promptly changed their condition of existence on seeing Māyādevī. Those struck down by illnesses arising from the union of wind, bile, and phlegm; those tormented by the diseases of the eyes, the ears, the nose, the tongue, the lips, the teeth, or the throat; those afflicted with swelling of the neck or chest; for any with leprosy, scabies, consumption, madness, epilepsy, fever, stomachache, skin maladies, and so on: all were delivered from their maladies when the mother of the Bodhisattva extended her right hand over their heads, and

then each returned to his dwelling. Māyādevī also gathered herbs which she used to treat illness; anyone taking them was completely cured of his afflictions.

When Māyādevī looked at her right side, she could see the Bodhisattva, as a face is seen in a mirror, and the sight gave her satisfaction, happiness, and delight; it filled her heart with joy and pleasure.

O monks, through the benediction of the Bodhisattva who had entered the womb of his mother, the musical instruments of the gods sounded forth night and day, and heavenly flowers fell like rain. The winds blew, and rain fell at favorable times, and stars and the seasons made their orderly revolutions. The kingdom enjoyed abundance and prosperity free from strife.

Throughout the great city of Kapila, the Śākyas as well as all others rejoiced, eating, drinking, amusing themselves, giving alms, and doing good works; they passed the days living in pleasure as though it were a holiday lasting four months. King Śuddhodana, living the perfectly pure life of a brahmacārin, put aside business matters, and like an ascetic in the forest, concerned himself only with observing spiritual practices.

O monks, these conditions were manifestations of supernatural power displayed by the Bodhisattva while dwelling in the womb of his mother.

And then the Bhagavat said to Āyuṣmat Ānanda: "Do you see, Ānanda, the Ratnavyūha, the dwelling of the Bodhisattva in which he resided after entering the womb of his mother?" Ānanda replied: "I see it, O Bhagavat! I see it, Sugata!" The Tathāgata caused the Ratnavyūha to be seen

by Āyuṣmat Ānanda, by Śakra, lord of the gods, by the Four Guardians of the World, and by many other men and gods—a sight which gave them satisfaction, contentment, and delight, and filled their hearts with joy. Then Brahmā again transported the Ratnavyūha to the Brahma world, where he would build a caitya for it.

The Bhagavat again addressed the monks: "In this way the Bodhisattva, while residing for ten lunar months in his mother's womb, matured thirty-six ayutas of gods and men in the three vehicles."

Concerning this it is said:

When the Bodhisattva, the holiest of beings,
enters into the womb of a mother,
the earth with its forests shakes in six ways.

A golden-colored light spreads in all directions,
and all the lower states of being are purified.
All the gods are filled with joy, saying:
"He will be King of the Dharma!"

The Hero, the Best of Guides,
abides within the crystal sanctum covered with jewels.
Filled with the most softly perfumed sandalwood,
his dwelling shines;
the three thousand worlds filled with precious gems
do not have half its value.

From deep within the three thousand
great thousands of worlds

arises the lotus of Guṇakāra,
possessing the splendor of pure merits,
containing within it the drop of elixir.

Into the Brahma realm it climbs on the seventh day,
and Brahmā takes from it the precious drop,
to offer to the Bodhisattva.

Not one single being, having drunk it, could digest it
save only a Bodhisattva of perfect conduct.

Nourished by this drop of elixir,
formed from the splendor of the merits of many kalpas,
one's body, speech, and mind become most pure.

To render homage to the Guide of the World,
Śakra, Brahmā, and the Guardians of the World
three times enter the Bodhisattva's presence.

Having praised and honored him,
having listened to the excellent Dharma,
having circumambulated him three times,
they depart as they have come.

Bodhisattvas from all the regions of the universe,
desirous of hearing the Dharma,
appear together, seated on luminous thrones.

Having heard the Dharma of the Great Vehicle,
they depart with joyous hearts,
reciting a garland of praises.

Women and children possessed by demons,
with troubled minds, naked, and covered with dust,
at the sight of Māyā recover their senses.
Memory and judgment renewed,
they return to their dwellings.

Those who are sickened by wind, bile, or phlegm,
or affiicted in body and mind
by diseases of the eyes or ears;

Those stricken with maladies
of different kinds and origins,
are cured by the touch of Māyā's hand on their heads.

And when Māyā takes from the ground healing herbs
and gives them to the sick, all are restored to health
and return to their dwellings.
And so it is that the King of Physicians, the great remedy,
has entered into the womb of a mother.

When Māyādevī looks at her body,
she sees the Bodhisattva in her womb.
Like the moon in the sky surrounded by stars,
she sees the Guide of the World, the Bodhisattva,
adorned with all the signs of a great man.

For him no torment of desire, hatred, or ignorance;
no love of pleasure, no jealousy or pain.

Satisfied in mind, joyous in mind,
fixed in contentment and quietude,
she feels no pangs of hunger or thirst,
she feels not the suffering of heat or of cold.

Untouched, divine instruments sound ceaselessly;
heavenly flowers rain down with the sweetest of perfumes.

Gods and men, even humans and non-humans,
put aside their differences;
they do not strike or wound each other.

All beings are delighted and happy;
they give away food and drink,

and shout with joy,
so happy and satisfied are they.

The kingdom is filled with prosperity and peace;
rain falls in its season;
grasses, flowers, and medicinal plants have timely growth.

For seven days and seven nights,
a rain of precious things falls in the kingdom;
the poor receive all they can take and enjoy.

Those who once were poor or suffering
are now as joyous as the beings in the Nandana woods
on the summit of Meru.

And the king of the Śākyas devotes himself to fasting;
leaving aside the affairs of his kingdom,
he turns his mind to spiritual practice.

Entering the forest of the ascetics,
he says to Māyādevī:
"How great must be the joy you feel
as you carry the greatest of beings."

The Sixth Chapter
The Descent into the Womb



Plate 7



Plate 7

जन्मपरिवर्तः

།བལྟམས་པའི་ལེའུ།

The Birth

O MONKS, WHEN TEN MONTHS HAD PASSED and the time for the birth of the Bodhisattva had drawn nigh, thirty-two precursory signs appeared at the palace. What were these thirty-two signs? All the flowers burst into bloom. In the ponds, blue lotuses, yellow, red, and white lotuses opened their buds and extended their flowers. In the gardens, young flowering trees and fruit trees blossomed, even from new growth. Eight jeweled trees and twenty thousand treasures appeared. Within the dwellings, sprouts appeared on the jeweled trees. Streams of warm and cool waters, scented with sweet perfumes, began to flow. From the slopes of the Himālayas lion cubs found their way into the city of Kapila, and circling joyously three times around the city, they came up to the doorways without hurting any being. Five hundred young white elephants appeared and touched the feet of King Śuddhodana with the tips of their trunks.

In the inner apartments of King Śuddhodana, the children of the gods wrapped in swaddling clothes were seen being rocked back and forth. Ten thousand urns full of water were seen circling the great city of Kapilavastu. Sus-

pended in the expanse of the heavens, the daughters of the nāgas appeared, showing the upper half of their bodies and holding various offerings. The daughters of the gods also appeared in the sky, motionless and waiting: ten thousand goddesses holding fans made of peacock feathers; ten thousand goddesses bearing on their heads golden vases filled with scented water; ten thousand goddesses carrying parasols, standards, and banners; and hundreds of thousands of goddesses holding conch shells and drums, with hand drums hung round their necks. All stood motionless and waiting.

The winds were quiet and did not blow. Rivers and streams stopped flowing. The moon, the sun, the celestial chariots, and the planets stood still, as did the multitude of stars. The constellation Puṣya appeared. A jeweled trellis covered the palace of King Śuddhodana, and the palace fires stopped burning. Pearls and precious stones appeared, hanging on the galleries, the palaces, the terraces, and over the portals. Shops which dealt in white cloth, shops with various precious things, all stood wide open. The cries of crows, owls, and vultures, of wolves and jackals ceased, and only the most pleasant of sounds were heard. All the labors of men came to a halt.

The high and low places of the earth were leveled; all the crossroads, public squares, streets, and markets were as smooth as the palm of the hand, covered with flowers and shining. All pregnant women gave birth easily. The gods of the śāla wood were seen motionless, amidst the trees, revealing the upper half of their bodies, bowing down with respect.

These were the thirty-two precursory signs.

Through the power of the Bodhisattva, Queen Māyā knew that the time for the birth of the Bodhisattva was at hand. At the first watch of the night, she searched out King Śuddhodana and spoke the following:

"Lord, pray heed me as I tell you my thoughts.
It has been a long time
since I have thought of the pleasure garden.
But now I would like to go to the garden,
if it would cause you no displeasure,
no fear, embarrassment, or worry.

"You have turned to thoughts of the Dharma;
you have long undergone austerities;
for my part, I have long been carrying
a pure being within me.
The śālas, the most beautiful of trees,
are covered with blossoms;
it is fitting, O King, to go to the pleasure garden.

"Spring, the most beautiful of seasons,
is for women a time to adorn themselves.
The calls of the cuckoos and the peacocks
resound in the midst of the woods,
and pollen from many flowers flies everywhere,
fresh and sparkling.
Pray, give the order without delay!"

The most powerful of kings is pleased
to hear these words from the queen.

Joyfully, he calls to his retinue:
"Prepare the horses, elephants, and chariots.
Prepare and decorate the Lumbinī garden,
the garden of most perfect beauty.

"Prepare twenty thousand elephants,
dark blue like mountains and thunderclouds.
Outfit them with trappings of pearls and gold.
Cover them with golden netting, and to the flanks
of the six-tusked king of the elephants, attach tiny bells.

"Prepare twenty thousand horses white as snow,
white as silver, with beautiful plaited manes.
Ornament their flanks with golden nets
hung with little bells.
Light and swift as the wind
are the mounts for the king.

"Make ready promptly troops of brave warriors,
lovers of combat numbering twenty thousand.
Let them brandish their swords,
their bows, arrows, and javelins.
Let them guard Māyā and her following
with the deepest respect.

"Drape the Lumbinī garden
with golden ornaments and pearls.
Tie many red banners to the trees,
and strew flowers all about.
Make all in readiness until Lumbinī
is like the garden of the gods."

The attendants quickly prepare the mounts
and decorate the Lumbinī garden.
As soon as it is done, they all call out:

"Victory! Victory! O Prince of Men,
may you live forever!
All has been done just as you have said.
Look, O Lord! The time has come!"

With a joyous mind the prince of men
enters the palace and speaks to the women:
"You whom I hold dear and who desire to please,
may you do as I ask and adorn yourself well.

"Pray, dress with joy.
Anoint with the sweetest perfume
your clothing of different colors,
soft and ravishing to the heart.
Decorate yourself with pearl necklaces
covering your breast. Show, today,
the splendor of all your ornaments.

"Prepare the drums and lutes,
the flutes, the harps and tambourines,
and a hundred thousand delightful instruments.
Enhance the joy of the daughters of the gods.
May the sweetness of the sounds
charm the gods themselves.

"Let Queen Māyā ride alone
in the finest of chariots, drawn by maidens of rank;
let no other man or woman enter within.
Let no disagreeable or discordant sound be heard."

When Queen Māyā appears on the threshold,
horses, elephants, chariots, foot soldiers,
the whole army assembled there in all its glory
roars like a stormy sea, and a hundred thousand bells
ring out as a sign of benediction.

The king himself decorates the shining chariot,
and thousands of gods prepare the throne.

The ornamental trees are covered with leaves and flowers.
Peacocks, herons, and geese call out joyously;
parasols, standards, and banners flutter on all sides.
The daughters of the gods look down upon the chariot
covered with silken drapery.
When Māyā is seated on the lion throne,
they sing soft and heavenly melodies of praise.

The land of the three thousand worlds
is strongly shaken in six ways.
The gods wave scarves while tossing flowers.

Today the greatest of men
will be born in the Lumbinī grove.
The Four Guardians of the World pull the chariot.
Indra himself, master of the Tridaśas, purifies the route,
while Brahmā marches ahead, pushing aside the unruly,
and a hundred thousand gods
bow respectfully with joined palms.

The king sees all this with a satisfied mind, thinking:
one so honored by the Four Guardians of the World,
by Brahmā and the gods, together with Indra,
will certainly be a Buddha.
No other in the three worlds could bear such an honor:
he would fall into pieces;
his head would be broken, his life would be lost.
But the One who is above the gods sustains all honors.

O monks, Māyādevī went forth from the gates of the palace surrounded by eighty-four thousand horse-drawn chariots and by eighty-four thousand palanquins carried by elephants covered with ornaments of every kind. An army of eighty-four thousand handsome, sturdy, and heroic soldiers armed with shields and breastplates guarded her. Sixty thousand Śākya women walked before her, and at her side came forty thousand of the king's paternal relatives, old, young, and of middle age. Sixty thousand persons of the king's inner apartment surrounded her with song and music from instruments of every kind. Eighty-four thousand daughters of the gods escorted her, and also eighty-four thousand daughters of the nāgas, eighty-four thousand daughters of the gandharvas, eighty-four thousand daughters of the kinnaras, and eighty-four thousand daughters of the asuras, all beautifully adorned, all singing melodies and praises.

The whole garden of Lumbinī, most beautiful of gardens, was sprinkled with scented water and filled with heavenly flowers. The gods had decorated it to perfection, just as they do the garden of Miśraka. And all its trees produced leaves and fruits, though out of season.

Stepping forth from that most handsome of chariots, Māyādevī entered the Lumbinī garden, surrounded by the daughters of both men and gods; walking from grove to grove, she looked at one tree after another, until she came to the plākṣa tree, the most beautiful of them all. Its well-proportioned branches were covered with bright leaves and buds, as well as with flowers found both in heaven and on earth. This tree gave off the sweetest perfumes, and its branches were draped with streamers of many colors. The plākṣa shone with precious stones; jewels adorned it entirely —the roots, the trunk, the graceful branches, and even

the leaves. Where the tree stood rooted, the earth was as level as the palm of the hand, and carpeted with grass green as a peacock's neck, soft to the touch as a garment of kācalindi cloth. The mothers of preceding Jinas had all leaned against this tree; the gods, beautiful and perfectly pure, had praised it in song. Hundreds of thousands of Śuddhāvāsa gods, tranquil in mind, their hair plaited and crowned with diadems, bent their heads to honor this tree.

As Māyādevī approached, through the power of the glorious Bodhisattva, the plākṣa tree bowed to her in greeting. Māyādevī raised her right arm, shining like a lightning flash in the sky, and grasped a branch of the plākṣa tree to bear her weight. Stretching, she gazed at the broad expanse of the sky. From among the gods of the desire realm, sixty thousand apsarases drew near to serve her and form an honor guard around her.

Miraculous manifestations occurred, like those when the Bodhisattva had entered into the womb of his mother. The end of the ten months having arrived, the Bodhisattva now came forth, possessing full memory and knowledge; from the right side of his mother he emerged, untouched by the taint of the womb. Of no one else can this be said.

At that very instant, O monks, Śakra, lord of the gods, and Brahmā, lord of the Sahā worlds, stood before the Bodhisattva. Filled with profound reverence, they remembered and recognized him; full of respect for the tender form of his body, they wrapped the Bodhisattva in a silken garment woven with gold and silver threads and took him in their arms. Then Brahmā and the devaputras of the Brahma realm took away the jeweled sanctum in which the Bodhisattva had dwelt while in the womb of his mother;

they carried it into the world of Brahmā in order to make a caitya for it and to pay it homage. The Bodhisattva had been touched by no human being; the gods themselves had received him.

As soon as he was born, the Bodhisattva descended to earth, and a great lotus arose from the depth of the earth to receive him. The nāga kings Nanda and Upananda, showing the upper half of their bodies in the expanse of the sky, caused two streams of cool and warm water to flow forth to bathe the Bodhisattva; then Śakra, Brahmā, the Guardians of the World, and hundreds of thousands of devaputras sprinkled the Bodhisattva with perfumed waters and flower essences. Two royal fans and a jeweled parasol appeared in the air above the Bodhisattva, who stood on the great lotus, surveying the ten directions with the gaze of a lion, with the gaze of a great being.

O monks, the Bodhisattva looked forth with the divine eye which arose through the complete maturation of the root of previous virtue. With the unobstructed divine eye he saw completely all the three thousand great thousands of worlds with their cities and villages, their provinces, capitals, and kingdoms, as well as all the gods and men. He knew perfectly the thought and conduct of all beings; and knowing them, he saw that there was no one comparable to himself in moral conduct, contemplation, knowledge, or virtue. In all the three thousand great thousands of worlds, the Bodhisattva saw no being equal to himself.

Like a fearless lion, the Bodhisattva recalled the thought of goodness which is free from longing, free from fear and terror. Knowing the thoughts and the conduct of all beings, the Bodhisattva took seven steps toward the east, unsup-

ported by anyone, and said: "I will walk at the head of all the dharmas which have virtue as their root." Above him as he walked floated a great white parasol and two royal fans; beneath him lotuses sprang up wherever he set foot.

The Bodhisattva took seven steps to the south and stated: "I will be worthy of the offerings of both gods and men." Taking seven steps to the west, like a lion well-satisfied, he pronounced these words: "I am the finest in the world, for this is my final birth; I shall put an end to birth, old age, sickness, and death!" He took seven steps to the north and said: "I will be unequaled among all beings!" Taking seven more steps, he faced below and stated: "I will destroy Māra and his army. I will extinguish the fires of hell with rain from the great cloud of the Dharma, filling beings in the hell realms with joy!" Taking seven final steps, he faced upward and stated: "It is on high that I shall be visible to all beings!"

Just as these words were pronounced by the Bodhisattva, at that very moment, the three thousand great thousands of worlds heard a voice saying: "Behold the essence of direct knowledge, born of the complete maturation of the actions of the Bodhisattva."

When a Bodhisattva in his last existence comes to be born, and also when he attains the perfect and unexcelled Enlightenment of a Buddha, miraculous manifestations take place.

O monks, all beings felt their skin shiver with pleasure. A great frightening earthquake made their hair stand on end, and the musical instruments of gods and men sounded without being touched. At the same time everywhere in the three thousand great thousands of worlds, trees of all sea-

sons brought forth perfect flowers and fruits. From the heights of heaven, thunder was heard, and from the cloudless sky the gods caused a light rain to fall. From the land of the gods came forth all sorts of flowers, garments, ornaments, and perfumed powders; soft fragrant winds began to blow. Every place took on a serene and luminous appearance, free from shadows, dust, smoke, and fog.

Sweet and prolonged, the great sounds of Brahmā were heard from the heights of the sky. All the splendors of Candra and Sūrya, of Indra, Brahmā, and the Guardians of the World were eclipsed by a light which spread throughout the three thousand great thousands of worlds, sparkling with a hundred thousand colors, producing well-being and joy in the body and mind of each being touched by its rays.

As soon as the Bodhisattva was born, great pleasure filled all beings. All were delivered from desire, hatred, and ignorance, pride, sadness, depression, and fear. They were freed from attachment, jealousy, and greed, and ceased all actions contrary to virtue. The sick were cured; the hungry and thirsty were no longer oppressed by hunger and thirst. Those maddened by drink lost their obsession. The mad recovered their senses, the blind regained sight, and the deaf once more could hear. The halt and the lame obtained perfect limbs, the poor gained riches, and prisoners were delivered from their bonds. For beings thrown into the Avīci and the other hells, for beings reduced to the condition of beasts devouring one another, and for hungry and thirsty beings in the realm of Yāma, there was relief from suffering and misery.

Because of the pure actions which he had accomplished for hundreds of thousands of niyutas of koṭis of kalpas, the

Bodhisattva had acquired the essence of the Dharma; he was endowed with tremendous force and strength. When he took seven steps at the time of his birth, the Buddhas of the ten directions at once gave the place where he walked a diamond nature, lest the force of his steps produce devastation.

O monks, the Bodhisattva was endowed with a force of such great strength that when he was born and took seven steps, all the world was filled with great light. Clouds of flowers, incense, and perfume descended; flowers, garlands, pearls, ornaments, and banners fell in profusion. The air rang with loud sounds of singing and dancing, for all beings were filled with the greatest joy. Such were the great events which occurred at the time the Bodhisattva, raised high above all the worlds, was born into this world.

At this point the Āyuṣmat Ānanda arose from his seat and, having thrown his robe over his shoulder, he put his right knee to the ground. Joining his palms, he bowed to the Bhagavat and said: "Bhagavat, the blessed Tathāgata has been a source of astonishment for all beings. If even the Bodhisattva possesses the most wonderful Dharma, what then can be said of one who has attained the all-surpassing Enlightenment of a perfect and complete Buddha?

"And I, O Bhagavat, four times, five times, ten times, fifty times, several hundreds of thousands of times, I take refuge in the Lord Buddha."

After Āyuṣmat Ānanda had spoken, the Bhagavat said to him: "There will certainly be, Ānanda, in a time to come, monks who have not prepared their bodies, who have not prepared their minds, who have not prepared their conduct

or their knowledge. Ignorant and unskilled, proud, vainglorious, and arrogant, dissipated and unrestrained, filled with envy, full of doubts, and lacking faith, they will stand out as a blemish in the midst of the śramaṇas.

"In contrast to the śramaṇas, they will not believe that the descent of the Bodhisattva into the womb of his mother was perfectly pure. Having gathered together, they will say to each other: 'How undignified! The Bodhisattva entered into the womb of his mother and mingled with a mass of filth. Is this pure action? It is said that he was born from his mother's right side, that he was not soiled by the maternal womb. How is that possible?' Those foolish men will not recognize that the bodies of beings who have done good works do not come forth from uncleanliness. O monks, excellent is the entry of pure beings into the womb of a mother, and pure their stay there.

"It is through compassion for beings that a Bodhisattva is born into the world of men, for gods do not turn the Wheel of the Dharma. If the Buddha were a god, Ānanda, beings would then become discouraged. They would say: 'The Bhagavat Tathāgata Arhat is a truly perfect and fulfilled Buddha; he is a god, but we, being only men, are incapable of fulfilling the conditions needed to become the same as he is.' And so they would become discouraged. It never occurs to the foolish men, robbers of the Law, that this Being is truly incomprehensible, that he can not be measured by them.

"Moreover, Ānanda, the foolish men will not believe possible the miracles of the Buddha, much less the manifestations of the supernatural power of the Bodhisattva as the Tathāgata Bodhisattva. Ānanda, what a series of misconceptions and wrong actions these foolish men will per-

petuate! Rejecting the teachings of the Buddha, they will be submerged in desire for gain, honor, and fame."

Ānanda said: "Will there truly be, Bhagavat, in a time to come, monks who will reject the teachings of this excellent Sūtra, and even speak against it?" And the Bhagavat replied: "Such men will certainly appear, Ānanda, men who will reject this Sūtra, will speak against it, and will conceive many other blameworthy notions, without care for their responsibilities as śramaṇas."

Ānanda asked: "O Bhagavat, what will be the way of such virtueless men? What will be their future?" The Bhagavat replied: "Those who cast aspersions on the Enlightenment of the Buddha and of the Buddhas past, present, and future, who find fault with the Buddhas, will go the way such men go."

Then the Āyuṣmat Ānanda trembled and cried out: "Adoration to the Buddha!" and he said to the Bhagavat: "On learning of the conduct of these men without virtue, I become faint, O Bhagavat."

The Bhagavat replied: "Ānanda, since the conduct of those beings is not correct, they will go the way of those with improper conduct—they will fall into Avīci, the great hell. Why is that? Ānanda, monks, nuns, or devotees, whoever hears such a Sūtra and does not admire it, does not have confidence in it, and rejects it, will be thrust into Avīci, the great hell, as soon as he dies.

"Ānanda, do not measure the Tathāgata! Why? Ānanda, the Tathāgata is immeasurable, profound, expansive, and difficult to understand.

"Ānanda, whoever hears such a Sūtra and feels joy, pleasure, and faith, such beings will greatly benefit. Their human lives will bear much fruit; they will always act with righteousness; they will take up the essence of the Dharma; they will be delivered from the three lower states of being; they will be sons of the Tathāgata. Whatever they need, they will obtain. Fruitful for them will be the acquisition of faith, and well-shared by them will be the produce of the land. They will admire holy beings. Breaking the chains of demons, they will pass beyond the desert of transmigrant life. They will withdraw the arrow of suffering and will obtain the treasure of great joy. They have taken refuge and are worthy of homage and support.

"Ānanda, these beings come forth in the world very rarely; they are held dear in the world. Why is that? They have faith in the Dharma of the Tathāgata, which does not accord with worldliness. Ānanda, these beings are not even slightly tainted by non-virtue. They are friends and companions from many lifetimes.

"Why is that? Some, O Ānanda, are happy merely listening to my teaching, and some in seeing me are joyful. Some who find pleasure in seeing have not heard me. There are also some who rejoice in both hearing and seeing, and these have been my friends and companions for many lifetimes. You should understand this.

"They are seen by the Tathāgata and will be delivered by the Tathāgata to whom they have gone for refuge. Their qualities are similar to those of the Tathāgata, and they are accepted by the Tathāgatas. O Ānanda, formerly, when I led the life of a Bodhisattva, I gave security to whomever came into my presence hounded by fear and begging for

safety; all the more so now, when I have obtained the perfect and accomplished qualities of a Buddha.

"Ānanda, strive for faith; that is what the Tathāgata tells you. Whatever you must do, Ānanda, the Tathāgata has done, and the Tathāgata has cleared away the goad of pride. Ānanda, on hearing about a friend, have you not traveled a hundred yojanas in order to see him? And were you not happy to see him? Are you not happy to see the Tathāgata, a friend one has not seen for ages?

"Those who depend on me will grow in virtue. The Tathāgatas of the future, the Arhats, the perfect and complete Buddhas, will know them. Those who were formerly the friends of the Tathāgatas are our friends; this is my thought. Why is this? O Ānanda, a true friend takes to his heart those dear to him, and those dear to his dear friends.

"Ānanda, I urge you to understand: only produce faith and I will lead you into the presence of the Tathāgatas of the future, the Arhats, and the truly perfect and fulfilled Buddhas, saying: he also is our friend! And having understood this, they will fulfill your every thought.

"Ānanda, if a man had an only son, and this man, attracting respect, had many friends, even if the father died, the son would not be destitute, for he would be well-received by his father's friends. In the same way, Ānanda, whoever has faith is welcomed by me as a friend, and there are many who take refuge in me. The Tathāgata has many friends, and these friends of the Tathāgata, who tell the truth and do not tell lies, I entrust as well to the future Tathāgatas, Arhats, truly perfect and fulfilled Buddhas; thus will they become enlightened. Ānanda, strive for faith; this is what I recommend."

O monks, as soon as the Bodhisattva was born, hundreds of thousands of niyutas of koṭis of goddesses floating in the sky covered Māyādevī with flowers, perfumes, garlands, ointments, garments, and ornaments.

Concerning this it is said:

For the one of spotless virtue,
shining with golden light like the sun and moon,
sixty thousand heavenly goddesses sing sweet melodies.
Having come in an instant to the Lumbinī garden,
they say to Māyādevī: "We offer you
our love and respect. Be always joyful.

"Speak! What may we do for you?
What is it that you need?
We are ready to render any service,
and are joyous with this task.
Set aside all sadness
and be filled with the greatest joy.
Today, O Queen, you will give birth
to the Greatest of Physicians,
one who will destroy old age and death.

"The śāla trees have burst into bloom;
hundreds of thousands of gods
bow low before you, holding out their arms.
The land and sea tremble in six ways.
Today you will bring forth a son
renowned in heaven and earth,
superior to all in the world.

"The air glows with a pure golden light;
a hundred instruments, without being touched,
send sweet music into the air;
a hundred thousand Śuddhāvāsa gods,
pure and free from passion,
bow before you with joyous minds.
Today you will give birth to a son,
who will be the help of all worlds.

"Śakra, Brahmā, the Guardians of the World,
and many other gods stand joyously at your side,
adoring you with outstretched arms;
and the Lion of Men, his vows fulfilled,
emerges from the right side of his mother,
like a golden mountain;
the Guide of the World emerges in brilliant light."

Śakra and Brahmā receive the Muni in their arms;
a hundred thousand Buddha-fields tremble,
and pure light rays shine forth;
a hundred thousand gods throw flowers and wave banners;
even the creatures in the three lower states of being
are joyful and free from misery.

The power of the earth is strengthened
to a diamond nature and so remains firm.
Wherever the most excellent Guide places his feet,
embellished with the mark of a wheel,
a lotus of marvelous beauty arises.
After taking seven steps,
he calls out with a voice like Brahmā's:
"I will be the Greatest of Physicians,
the destroyer of sickness and death."

Brahmā and Śakra bathe the most excellent Guide
with sweet-smelling waters, soft and refreshing.
Two nāga kings in the sky cause two pure streams
of water, warm and cool, to flow,
and one hundred thousand gods
bathe the most excellent Guide with scented waters.

The Guardians of the World, with great respect,
hold him in their beautiful hands.
Both the stable and the shifting regions
of the three thousand worlds are shaken.

Brilliant light rays shine forth,
soothing those in the lower realms of being.
The suffering of emotionality is relieved
when the most excellent Guide is born into the world.

The gods cast flowers on this conquering Guide of Men,
the strong and courageous hero.
Newly born, he takes seven firm steps,
and wherever he places his feet,
the most beautiful of lotuses rise from the earth,
adorned with all kinds of precious things.

After taking seven steps,
he speaks with a voice like Brahmā's:
"The destroyer of old age and death has come forth,
the Greatest of Physicians."

Looking fearlessly in all directions,
he pronounces these words rich in meaning:
"I am the Leader of the World;
I am the Guide of the World.

"This is my final birth."
And speaking thus, the Guide of Men smiles.

The greatest of the gods and the Guardians of the World
together with Indra produce great faith,
and with scented waters
bathe the one who came to help the world.

The princes of the nāgas, all assembled,
bathe him also; and other gods as well,
hundreds of thousands suspended in the air,
bathe him with sweet-smelling waters.

Beneath the shelter of a large white parasol and royal fans,
they bathe the freely-arising being with perfumed water;
thus do the gods, suspended in the air,
bathe the greatest of men.

Someone goes in haste to King Śuddhodana
and tells him with joy: "O King,
a son of great fortune has been born, adorned with signs.

"Firstborn jewel of a great family!
Certainly he will be a Cakravartin king.
Having no enemy in the land of Jambu,
he alone will hold the parasol,
insignia of sovereignty."

A second man runs to King Śuddhodana to say:
"Great fortune, sire, to the Śākya race—
five hundred thousand allies have been born,
endowed with strength and greatness."

Another man says: "Sire, hear this joyful news:
eight hundred sons have been born to the servants,
who will be under the charge of Chandaka.
Ten thousand foals have been born to the horses,
with Kaṇṭhaka at their head; they are the best of horses,
golden-colored, with beautiful manes.

And twenty thousand sons have been born
to the kings of the frontier fortresses."

Approaching the feet of the king, he says:
"O great and glorious King, give your orders.
Where shall we go? What shall we do?
You have the power; we are your servants.
Lord, may you celebrate your victory!"

Twenty thousand elephants,
brilliant under golden netting,
come in haste to the Śākya kingdom,
filling the air with their cries.
Six thousand cows and calves, spotted with black,
have also been born.

For the one who is born above the gods
has brought glory and increase to the kingdom.

Shining with the light of merit,
the one born a king has arrived in the world.
Men and gods by the thousands
exclaim in joy upon seeing his virtues:
"Enlightened One, free from all suffering,
may you soon be victorious!"

O monks, when the Bodhisattva was born, an abundant distribution of gifts took place. At the same time were born five hundred sons of good family, along with ten thousand girls with Yaśovatī at their head. Eight hundred serving girls were also born, and eight hundred boys with Chandaka at their head. Ten thousand horsemen were born, and ten

thousand steeds with Kaṇṭhaka at their head. Many elephants were born as well, five hundred female and five hundred male, all marked by the king with ornamental letters on their trunks and given to the young prince for his amusement.

By the power of the Bodhisattva and for the enjoyment of the Bodhisattva, an aśvattha flower appeared in the middle of the four hundred thousand koṭis of continents, and in the lower continent appeared a forest of sandalwood trees. On all sides of the city appeared five hundred gardens for the enjoyment of the Bodhisattva. And five thousand treasure chests arose from the soil of the earth and opened their lids. All that King Śuddhodana could wish for had come about.

Then the thought occurred to the king: "What name should I give the young prince?" And he thought: "Since all my wishes were perfectly fulfilled as soon as the child was born, Sarvārthasiddha shall be the name I give him." And having honored the Bodhisattva with a great show of respect, King Śuddhodana said: "May the young prince be known as Sarvārthasiddha."

O monks, the Bodhisattva had been born from the right side of his mother's womb, without any rent or injury to her; just as she was before, so she was afterwards. And at the time of birth, wells with three springs appeared, and also ponds of perfumed oils.

Five thousand apsarases came before the Bodhisattva's mother bearing oils impregnated with divine perfumes, asking had the birth been happy, asking had it left her weary. Bearing vases filled with divinely scented waters, five thousand apsarases approached the Bodhisattva's mother, asking had the birth been happy, asking had it left

her weary. Bearing garments of the children of the gods, five thousand apsarases approached the Bodhisattva's mother, asking had the birth been happy, asking had it left her weary. Bearing ornaments of the children of the gods, five thousand apsarases approached the Bodhisattva's mother, asking had the birth been happy, asking had it left her weary. Bearing instruments for divine music, five thousand apsarases approached the Bodhisattva's mother, asking had the birth been happy, asking had it left her weary.

And all the many foreign ṛṣis in the land of Jambu, endowed with five superior kinds of knowledge, all came flying through the skies and stopped in the presence of King Śuddhodana to say: "May the king be victorious and prosper!" Such were the words they uttered.

O monks, at the time the Bodhisattva was born, he was honored for seven days in the Lumbinī garden. He was surrounded with respect, with homage, and with offerings, with the sounds of the instruments of both gods and men. Delicate dishes were prepared and offered, and all of the Śākyas assembled with cries of delight to give presents and do good works. The needs of thirty-two thousand brāhmins were satisfied every day; all were given what their hearts desired. Śākra and Brahmā took on the form of young men from the assembly of brāhmins and, seating themselves in the first available places, uttered these verses on the omens:

"Those in lower states of being are comforted,
and all beings are made happy.

Surely the one bringing joy has been born
to establish all beings in bliss.

"The light which destroys darkness
eclipses the sun and moon.
Surely the one with the splendor of merit has appeared.

"The blind see and the deaf hear,
and fools have regained their senses.
Surely many caityas will be built to honor him.

"The fettering passions no longer bring torment,
and love of all beings has come into the world.
Beyond doubt he is worthy
of the homage of ten million Brahmās.

"The śālas are covered with flowers,
and the earth made smooth.
Certainly, he is worthy of all homage
and will be omniscient.

"The world is without disturbance,
and the great lotus has appeared.
Without any doubt, this brilliant one
will be the Guide of the World.

"Soft breezes perfumed with incense
relieve the suffering of beings,
and the illnesses of all creatures are cured.
Surely he will be the King of Physicians.

"The hundred gods of the realm of form
are freed from their passions
and bow with joined palms.
Surely he is worthy of offerings.

"Men see the gods, and the gods see men,
and neither harms the other.
Surely he will be the leader of all beings.

"The fires are out, the rivers cease flowing,
and the earth is gently shaken.
Surely he will be the one who sees the truth."

O monks, seven days after the Bodhisattva's birth, it came time for his mother, Māyādevī, to die. And upon her death, Māyādevī was reborn into the realm of the Thirty-three gods.

But monks, if you think that Māyādevī's death was due to the birth of the Bodhisattva, you are wrong. That is truly not the way to see it. And why not? Because she had reached the end of her life. With Bodhisattvas of the past also, seven days after their final birth, their mothers have died. And why? Because if a Bodhisattva were to grow up, his faculties fully developed, at the moment he left home, his mother's heart would break.

Thus, O monks, seven days after Māyādevī left the great city of Kapilavastu to go in magnificent splendor to the pleasure garden, the Bodhisattva returned to the great city of Kapilavastu with a splendor a hundred thousand koṭis greater.

As he entered the city, five thousand urns filled with scented water were carried before him. Sprinkling the road along the way were five thousand maidens holding golden vases full of scented water, and sweeping the road before

them were five thousand maidens wearing jeweled ornaments. Five thousand maidens wearing veils as well as five thousand maidens carrying garlands of flowers walked ahead. Also five thousand maidens holding fans of peacock feathers and five thousand young girls carrying branches of tāla trees walked ahead, and five thousand young girls carrying chairs of state also walked in the procession. Five thousand brāhmins ringing bells made auspicious sounds as they walked along. Walking ahead were twenty thousand elephants decorated with all their ornaments and twenty thousand horses all covered with golden garlands and with trappings.

Following the Bodhisattva came eighty thousand chariots, well-decorated with parasols, with flying standards and banners, and embellished with nets hung with little bells. Also following came forty thousand foot soldiers, dignified and courageous, with strong bodies covered by sturdy armor. In the sky countless numbers of hundreds of thousands of niyutas of koṭis of gods from the realm of desire and the realm of form paid homage to the Bodhisattva with displays of all sorts.

The gods of the desire realm had decorated the specially chosen chariot which carried the Bodhisattva. The chariot was pulled by twenty thousand apsarases, who were beautifully adorned with jeweled ornaments and carried garlands of pearls. Between each two apsarases was a young woman, and between each two women, an apsaras. Yet, through the power and glory of the Bodhisattva, the goddesses did not perceive the disagreeable odor of the women, and the women were not humiliated by the beauty of the apsarases.

O monks, five hundred Śākyas had built five hundred dwellings for the Bodhisattva in the beautiful city of

Kapila. When the Bodhisattva was entering the city, each Śākya, standing at the threshold of his dwelling, bowed respectfully to the Bodhisattva with joined palms, beseeching: "O Sarvārthasiddha, pray, enter here! God above all gods, pray, enter here! Pure Being, pray, enter here! Source of pleasure and joy, spotless in your glory, pray, enter here! All-seeing One, equal of the one without equal, pray, enter here! You who possess the splendor of peerless virtues, whose body is well-adorned with signs and secondary marks, pray, enter here!"

To reconcile them all with each other, King Śuddhodana had the Bodhisattva stay in each house in turn. Only after four months did the Bodhisattva enter into his own dwelling, the great palace known as Nānāratnavyūha, the Variegated Array of Jewels. Here the Bodhisattva settled, and here the oldest of the elders of the Śākya family assembled and took counsel, saying: "Who is truly capable of nurturing the Bodhisattva, of loving him, of caring for him? Who is the one benevolent enough in spirit, gentle enough in spirit, virtuous and good?" Then fifty different Śākya women each replied: "I am the one who should serve the Bodhisattva."

But the very eldest of the Śākyas remarked: "All these women are young and beautiful, heedless and proud of their youth and their beauty. They are not capable of serving the Bodhisattva. Only Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, sister of the mother of the young prince, is capable of rearing him. She will bring happiness to the prince and also make King Śuddhodana happy." All agreed to put their confidence in Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī, and so she was given the task of rearing the young prince.

Thirty-two nurses were chosen to serve the Bodhisattva: eight nurses to carry him, eight to suckle him, eight to bathe him, and eight to play with him.

Next, King Śuddhodana, having called an assembly of the Śākyas, posed this question: "Will the young prince be a Cakravartin king, or will he leave home to become a mendicant monk?"

Now at this time, on the slope of Mt. Himāvat, king of mountains, there lived a ṛṣi named Asita, together with his sister's son Naradatta. This great ṛṣi, possessing the five superior kinds of knowledge, observed many supernatural phenomena at the moment of the Bodhisattva's birth. In the expanse of the sky, he saw many devaputras transported with joy, calling out the name of the Buddha, and waving banners from side to side. The thought came to him: "I must see all of this in detail." With his divine eye, he examined the whole of the land of Jambu attentively and saw that in the great city of Kapila, in the home of King Śuddhodana, a young prince had been born, shining with the splendor of a hundred merits, glorified by the entire world, his body well-adorned with the thirty-two signs of a great man. Having seen the Bodhisattva, Asita addressed himself to Naradatta, the brāhmin youth: "Note well: a great jewel has appeared in the world. In the great city of Kapilavastu, in the home of the king, a young prince has been born, brilliant with the splendor of a hundred merits, honored by the entire world, endowed with the glory of the thirty-two signs of a great man.

"If he remains at home, he will be a Cakravartin king, the leader of four armies of victorious troops. He will be a great leader, devoted to the Dharma, having the strength

and courage of many subjects at his command. He will be a Dharma King, in possession of the seven jewels: the jewel of the wheel, the jewel of the elephant, the jewel of the horse, the jewel of the precious maṇi stone, the jewel of the queen, the jewel of the chancellor, and the jewel of the counselor. He will have a thousand heroic sons, courageous, handsome, and well-built, conquerors of enemy armies. Having subjugated the great circle of the great earth bounded by oceans with his law and might, without using force or armies, he will exercise royal authority with omnipotence.

"But if he departs his home to wander as a homeless monk, he will be a Tathāgata Arhat, a truly perfect and complete Buddha, a perfect Buddha, a teacher guided by no one in the world. Let us both go to gaze upon him."

Having spoken thus, Asita, the great ṛṣi, together with his nephew Naradatta, soared like swans across the skies toward the great city of Kapilavastu. There they alighted, and entering the great city on foot, they approached the door of the king's dwelling. O monks, at the door of the king's dwelling, the god-like ṛṣi saw assembled several hundreds of thousands of beings. Going up to the gatekeeper, Asita spoke these words: "Friend, please inform the king that a ṛṣi is at his door." "Very well," said the gatekeeper. And conforming to the ṛṣi's request, he went to King Śuddhodana. Joining his palms in respect, he said: "Know, sire, that a very aged ṛṣi is standing at the gates, saying that he desires to see the king."

The king had a seat prepared for the ṛṣi Asita; he then said to the gatekeeper: "Tell the ṛṣi he may enter." So the

gatekeeper returned to the ṛṣi and asked him to come into the palace.

Immediately, Asita approached King Śuddhodana and stood before him, saying: "May you be victorious, Great King, may you long be victorious! May your life be long! May you govern the kingdom of the Dharma!"

King Śuddhodana, having first honored the great ṛṣi Asita with respect and consideration, brought water to wash his feet and invited him to be seated. After seeing that the ṛṣi was comfortable, the king spoke to him with deference: "I do not remember, O Ṛṣi, ever having seen you before. What brings you here?"

Asita replied: "A son has been born to you, Great King. I have come to see him." "The young prince is sleeping, Great Ṛṣi," said the king. "Please wait until he awakens." To this the ṛṣi replied: "O King, such great men do not sleep for long; such virtuous men are accustomed to remain awake."

Then, O monks, the Bodhisattva, out of kindness to the ṛṣi Asita, made a sign that he was awake. Taking the young prince Sarvārthasiddha gently and carefully in his arms, King Śuddhodana brought him before the ṛṣi. And when the great ṛṣi Asita examined the Bodhisattva, he saw that his body bore the thirty-two signs of a great man, and the eighty secondary marks; he saw that it surpassed the body of Śakra, Brahmā, and the Guardians of the World, that the Bodhisattva had a brilliance greater than a hundred thousand suns, and that all his limbs were beautiful. Then he expressed his thoughts, saying: "Truly a great wonder has appeared in the world." And speaking thus, he arose from his seat and joining his hands respectfully, he prostrated himself at the feet of the Bodhisattva.

After circumambulating the Bodhisattva, Asita pressed him to his breast and gazed thoughtfully at the thirty-two signs marking the body of the Bodhisattva. For the great man endowed with these signs, there are two ways of being and no other. If he remains at home, he will be a Cakravartin king with four armies of victorious troops, a great leader devoted to the Dharma. Commanding the strength and courage of his subjects, he will be a Dharma king, possessing the seven jewels: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the maṇi stone, the queen, the chancellor, and the counselor. He will have a thousand heroic sons, courageous, handsome, and strong, conquerors of armies. Having subjugated the circle of the great earth bounded by oceans with his law and strength, without force or weapons, he will exercise royal authority with omnipotence.

But if he departs from home to wander as a homeless monk, he will be a Tathāgata, a perfect and complete Buddha, a guide unequaled by any other.

Looking upon the Bodhisattva, Asita began to weep, and uttered a deep sigh. King Śuddhodana, seeing the great ṛṣi weeping and sighing, shivered with anxiety. With strong apprehension, he asked the great ṛṣi: "Why are you weeping, Ṛṣi, and uttering great sighs? Is there some danger you see for the young prince?"

At these words, the ṛṣi Asita spoke the following: "Great King, it is not for the young prince that I am weeping, because for him there is truly no danger. It is for myself that I weep. Why is that, Great King? Because I am old and feeble.

"Young Sarvārthasiddha will surely obtain the peerless Enlightenment of a perfect and complete Buddha. He will

turn the Wheel of the matchless Dharma which no one else can turn: no śramaṇa or brāhmin, no god or demon, no one else at all in the world. For the salvation and the happiness of this world and that of the gods, he will teach the Dharma, good at the beginning, good in the middle, and good at the end; with meaning most excellent and perfectly pure; well-expressed, clear, and very complete—such a truly accomplished Dharma he will bring to light.

"Hearing the Dharma from this pure being, who knows the Dharma from his birth, one will be completely delivered from birth and old age, from sickness, sorrow, and lamentations, from pain, depression, troubles, and from calamities. For beings burning in the fires of passion, hatred, and ignorance, he will pour down the refreshing rain of the Dharma. Beings enveloped by the darkness of wrong views, who have wandered onto the wrong path, he will guide to the straight road that leads to Nirvāṇa. He will break the bonds of beings held in the ensnaring prison of life and bound by the fettering passions. For those whose vision is dimmed by the deep shadows of ignorance, he will produce the eye of wisdom. For those tormented by the sharp arrow of emotionality, he will extract the arrow.

"Great King, just as the uḍumbara flower rarely appears in the world, so also do the Bhagavat Buddhas appear in the world only after niyutas of koṭis of kalpas. This young prince, without any doubt, will obtain the perfect and complete qualities of a Buddha. And with those qualities, he will lead hundreds of thousands of niyutas of koṭis of beings to the shore which lies beyond the sea of rebirth and will establish them in Immortality!

"And I, I will not see this jewel of a Buddha! And this is why, Great King, I am weeping, I am distressed, and I utter

deep sighs, for I will not become free from sickness and from attachment.

"According to our holy Śāstras, Great King, the young Sarvārthasiddha, having the appearance that he does, will of necessity depart from home. Why is this? Because, O Great King, the young Sarvārthasiddha is endowed with the thirty-two signs of a great man.

"What are these thirty-two signs? They are these. Great King, the head of the young Siddhārtha is crowned with a protuberance of the skull. This sign is the first mark of a great man. Siddhārtha's hair whorls to the right, is curly and blue-black and brilliant like a peacock's neck. He has a broad and smooth forehead. A tuft of hair, Great King, arises in the middle of his eyebrows, as bright as snow or silver. He has eyelashes like those of a heifer. He has deep black eyes and forty uniform teeth, closely set and perfectly white.

"He has a voice like Brahmā's, O Great King, and an excellent sense of taste. He has a long and slender tongue, the jaw of a lion, and well-rounded arms. The seven principal parts of the body are lofty. His chest and shoulders are broad. He has fine, golden skin, and when he stands erect, his hands reach to his knees. His upper body is like a lion's. The young Sarvārthasiddha's figure is like the trunk of the fig tree, O Great King. His hairs grow one by one, and they curl toward the right at their tip. His private parts are hidden in a sheath. His thighs are well-developed, and he has the legs of the king of gazelles.

"His fingers are long, the soles of his feet are broad, and his stride is long. His hands and feet are soft and delicate, and his toes and fingers are joined by a membrane up to the

first joint. On the soles of young Sarvārthasiddha's feet, O Great King, are two wheels—beautiful, luminous, brilliant, and white, each with a thousand spokes between hub and rim. His feet are even and well-placed.

"O Your Majesty, the young Sarvārthasiddha is endowed with the totality of the thirty-two signs of a great man. And, Great King, such signs are not those of a Cakravartin, but are those of a Bodhisattva.

"Your Majesty, the eighty secondary marks also appear on the body of the young Sarvārthasiddha, showing that he will not wish to remain at home and will certainly depart to lead the life of a wandering monk. And what, O Great King, are these eighty secondary marks? They are as follows:

"The young Sarvārthasiddha has rounded fingernails, O Great King, glossy and the color of red copper. His fingers and toes are long and very fine and tapering. His veins and ankle bones are hidden. His joints are solid; his feet smooth and regular; his heels broad.

"O Your Majesty, the lines in young Sarvārthasiddha's hands are smooth, equal, regular, deep, and long. His lips are red like the fruit of the bimba, his voice well-modulated, not too high. His tongue is soft and delicate, the color of red copper. His sweet and beautiful voice sounds like the cry of an elephant, like thunder. O Great King, the young Sarvārthasiddha's sexual organs are complete. His arms are long, his limbs are broad and well-covered, his skin is soft. His body is not subject to fear or disquiet; it is well-proportioned, beautiful, and heroic. His limbs are perfect; his knees broad, strong, and well-developed.

"O Great King, the young Sarvārthasiddha's body is rounded and elegant, straight, smooth, and beautiful. His

navel is deep, straight, and regular. Like a ṛṣi, he is pure in conduct; his appearance is beautiful and pure, radiating such light that it dispels the shadows. Great King, young Siddhārtha moves with the dignity of a bull. He has the majestic gait of the elephant, O Great King, and the heroic walk of the lion. He has the powerful gait of the great bull, and moves like the flight of the goose. He walks always turning toward the right.

"The sides of his body are rounded, elegant, and symmetrical, and his waist is like the curve of a bow. O Great King, the brilliance of the young Sarvārthasiddha's body is untarnished—not a dark spot mars its beauty. His front teeth are rounded, his eyeteeth are pointed, his molars are regular. His nose is sharply defined; his brilliant, clear eyes are smiling, elongated, and large, like the petals of the blue lotus.

"The young Sarvārthasiddha, Great King, has eyebrows which are even, beautiful, dark, connected, and smoothly arched. His cheeks are full and even, free from imperfection. With his senses perfectly controlled, he is free from hostility and wrath. The sense organs of the young Sarvārthasiddha, O Great King, are perfect and complete. He has a face and a forehead in harmony with each other, and his head is well-developed. His hair is full-bodied, falling freely from his face and brow, well-arranged, smooth, and black. Sweet in smell and luxuriant, it is never unkempt or tangled, but is very fine and curly. The hair of the young Sarvārthasiddha, O Great King, curls into the forms of the śrīvatsa, the svastika, the nandyāvarta, and the vardhamāna.

"These, Great King, are the eighty secondary marks of the young Sarvārthasiddha. Endowed with these signs, the young prince will not want to remain a householder;

certainly he will depart from home to lead the life of a wandering monk."

After King Śuddhodana heard the prediction concerning the young prince from the great ṛṣi Asita, he was satisfied and happy, joyous, and carried away with delight. He rose from his seat and, prostrating himself at the feet of the Bodhisattva, recited this verse:

"You who are venerated
by all the gods together with Indra,
and honored also by the ṛṣis,
Physician to the entire world,
I, too, bow before you, Lord!"

O monks, King Śuddhodana then offered food to satisfy the great ṛṣi Asita and his nephew Naradatta, gave them fine garments, and circumambulated three times around them. Then Asita and his nephew, by means of supernatural power, returned through the sky to their hermitage. There, the great ṛṣi said to the brāhmin youth: "Naradatta, when you hear it said that a Buddha has appeared in the world, go to him and become a wandering monk under his tutelage. Thus will you find benefit, help, and happiness for a very long time to come."

Concerning this it is said:

Seeing the host of gods suspended in the heavens
proclaiming the fame of the Buddha,
Asita, the godly ṛṣi, abiding at Mt. Himāvat,
is filled with the greatest happiness.
"What is this name, 'Buddha,'
which brings joy to all beings?
My body is filled with well-being,
and my tranquil mind feels supreme calm.

"Does 'Buddha' refer to a god?
Or to an asura, a garuḍa, or perhaps a kinnara?
This previously unheard title of 'Buddha'
brings joy and pleasure.
What does it mean?"

The ṛṣi looks out over mountains, land, and sea;
he looks with divine eye in all the ten directions,
and everywhere he sees marvelous sights:
on the earth, the mountains, and the sea.

A shining light of many colors appears,
to delight and soothe the body.
Delicate branches of coral
are produced on the top of the mountains,
and the trees bear flowers and different kinds of fruit.
Clearly a Jewel of Beings
will soon appear in the three worlds.

The earth is shining, spotless, and smooth:
smooth as the palm of the hand.
In the sky the gods wave banners in heartfelt joy.

On the sea, the home of the nāga king,
marvelous jewels are floating.
Clearly the Jewel of the Jinas,
the Source of the Dharma,
has appeared in the land of Jambu.

The poor creatures in the lower states of being
are calmed, delivered from pain, and filled with ease;
the troops of gods in the sky's expanse
are filled with joy, and sing the sweet sound
that lies at the heart of heavenly songs.
Clearly a jewel has appeared in the three worlds.

Asita looks with his divine eye at the land called Jambu.
In the great city of Kapila,
in the palace of King Śuddhodana,
he sees the one born bearing the signs of splendid merit,
equal in strength to Nārāyaṇa,
and his heart is filled with joy and new strength.

In haste, his mind full of amazement,
the ṛṣi travels to Kapila, the most excellent city,
accompanied by his disciple,
and stands at the door of the Prince of Men.
Seeing the niyutas of koṭis of beings there to pay homage,
the old ṛṣi says to the gatekeeper:
"Tell the king that a ṛṣi is at his door."

The gatekeeper quickly goes into the palace
and announces to the king:
"At the door, sire, stands an ascetic, old and worn,
a great ṛṣi, wishing to enter the palace.
May permission be given, O Best of Lords,
for him to come within?"

The king prepares a seat for the ṛṣi,
and gives him permission to enter.
The gatekeeper's words fill Asita with joy—
the joy of a thirsty man finding water,
the joy of a hungry man seeing food.
Such is the feeling of the best of ṛṣis
nearing the presence of the highest of beings.

To the king he speaks in great delight:
"May you always be victorious, O King!
May you have a long life!"
Having wished for the king's prosperity,
he calmly sits down
with mind controlled, with senses appeased.
The king, addressing this best of ṛṣis, asks:
"Why have you come? Tell me promptly, O Sage."

"A son of the greatest beauty is born to you;
one who has reached the other shore.
Endowed with great splendor,
he is adorned with the thirty-two excellent signs
and the strength of Nārāyaṇa.
To see him is my desire, O Master of Men.
For the sake of Sarvārthasiddha, your son,
have I come, and for no other reason."

"Good! Good! You are welcome,
and I am happy to see you.
But the young prince is sleeping,
so wait a while, and then you will see him,
like the spotless full moon
adorned by the multitude of stars."

The Best of Charioteers awakens,
shining like the full moon,

his body bright as fire, brighter than the sun.
The king lifts him up:
"Ah, Ṛṣi! Look at the one honored by gods and men,
beautiful as the finest gold."
And the ṛṣi sees the Bodhisattva's beautiful feet,
both marked with a wheel.

Arising and joining his palms with respect,
the ṛṣi then holds Sarvārthasiddha to his breast.
Versed in the Śāstras, he examines the prince with skill.
He sees the excellent signs of the one
with the strength of Nārāyaṇa.
Versed in the Vedas and the Śāstras,
this ṛṣi sees the two possible paths;
shaking his head, he says:

"He will either be a powerful Cakravartin king,
or a Buddha, Leader of the World."
Deep in despair, he sighs profoundly and begins to weep.
The best of kings is troubled:
"Why is the brāhmin weeping?
Does he see a threat to my Sarvārthasiddha?
The truth, pray, speak it. Why are you weeping?
Is this good or bad?"

"I see no misfortune or hindrance for Sarvārthasiddha.
I lament for myself, O Master of Men,
for I am old and worn.
He will be a Buddha; honored by the world,
he will preach the Dharma.

"But I will not be there
to gaze on him with joyful eyes!
Therefore do I weep.
The spotless body marked with thirty-two signs

foretells two ways of being and not a third.
Know, O Lord, he will be a Cakravartin king
or a Buddha, the most elevated in the world.

"But he will not be attracted by the qualities of desire,
and he will be a Buddha."
Hearing the ṛṣi's prediction, the king is filled with joy.
Arising with his palms joined together,
the king bows with respect to the feet of the child, saying:
"Endowed with great strength,
you are honored by the gods and praised by the ṛṣis.

"I bow to you, great Leader of the caravan of beings,
honored by all in the three worlds."
Asita, now joyous, says to his sister's son:
"Listen well to my advice.
When you hear that an enlightened Buddha
is turning the Wheel of the Dharma in the world,
then enter quickly the religious path.
Under the direction of the Muni,
you will soon obtain deliverance!"

After bowing to the feet of the child
and circumambulating him three times,
the ṛṣi says: "Having such a son, O King,
you have gained great and abundant benefits.
With the Dharma he will satisfy completely
all the world of gods and men."
And so leaving the city of Kapila,
the best of ṛṣis returns to his forest hermitage.

O monks, as soon as the Bodhisattva was born, the devaputra Maheśvara called together the devaputras of the Śuddhāvāsa realm and spoke to them thus: "Friends, the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva, for immeasurable hundreds of thousands of niyutas of koṭis of kalpas, has devoted himself to the practice of purification, giving, morality, patience, effort, contemplation, wisdom, and skillful means. He hears the Dharma and acts accordingly, practicing austerities and good conduct. He is endowed with great love, great compassion, and great joy, and he has been elevated through equanimity. Eager to offer help and happiness to all beings, he is clothed in the armor of heroism. He has produced the root of virtue found in the previous Jinas; well-adorned with the signs of a hundred merits, he possesses fine actions resolutely accomplished. Destroyer of many fierce armies, endowed with pure and spotless intentions, he carries the great standard of knowledge. He will put an end to the power of Māra. Leader of the caravan of the three thousand great thousands of worlds, the Bodhisattva is honored by both gods and men.

"Having made great offerings, he possesses a multitude of accumulated merits. Having resolved to escape from the circle of rebirth, the Bodhisattva will put an end to birth, old age, and death. Well-born, he descends from the family of King Ikṣvāku. He will quickly cause the world to partake of supreme Enlightenment. Having appeared in the world of men, the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva will soon attain the matchless, perfect, and complete Enlightenment of a Buddha.

"Let us therefore render homage to him, adore him, and praise him. By this we will cut short the pride, haughtiness, and arrogance of the devaputras who are dominated by pride.

If they see us honor him, they too will greet, honor, and adore the Bodhisattva; and this will profit them, through all the time it takes for them to arrive at Immortality.

"Now let us proclaim the increase of the glory of King Śuddhodana. We shall make a true prediction concerning the Bodhisattva, and then return."

Then the devaputra Maheśvara, surrounded and preceded by twelve thousand other devaputras, approached the palace of King Śuddhodana, filling the entire city of Kapilavastu with a brilliant light.

Informed of his presence by the gatekeeper, the king invited Maheśvara into the palace. There Maheśvara bowed with his head to the feet of the Bodhisattva. Throwing his cloak over one shoulder, he circumambulated the Bodhisattva several hundreds of thousands of times and then took the Bodhisattva into his arms, speaking these happy words to King Śuddhodana: "O Your Majesty, you should have great joy! Supreme joy! For what reason? Because, O King, the body of the Bodhisattva is well-adorned with signs and secondary marks; the young prince surpasses all the gods, all men, and all asuras with his color, his glory, his majesty. Without any doubt, Great King, the Bodhisattva will attain the matchless, perfect, and complete Enlightenment of a Buddha."

Thus, O monks, the devaputra Maheśvara, together with the devaputras of the Śuddhāvāsa realm, performed the great ceremony of adoration of the Bodhisattva and made the true prediction about the Bodhisattva. Maheśvara then returned to his abode.

Concerning this it is said:

When the king of the gods learns
that the Ocean of Virtues has been born,
he says in joy to the gods:
"Let us go and worship this Prince of Men—
one so difficult even to hear of,
through many koṭis of kalpas."

The gods who are most pure,
their heads crowned with precious jewels,
their hair flowing and well-adorned,
twelve thousand in all,
go quickly to the city of Kapila
where they stand at the gate of the palace.

The soft-spoken ones say to the keeper of the gates:
"Enter the palace and inform the Master of Men."
So the gatekeeper enters the palace
and with palms joined respectfully, says to the king:

"May you always be victorious, O King,
and may your life be long!
At the gate stand beings
with the pure splendor of great merits,
their heads well-adorned with precious jewels;
their faces are like the full moon,
and they have the moon's spotless splendor.

"I have not seen their shadows, O King,
and I have not heard their footsteps;
walking on the earth, they raise no dust,
and people do not tire of gazing upon them.

"The splendor of their bodies is great and glorious;
their speech touches the heart,
and unlike the speech of men, is deep and caressing.
They have sweet manners and beautiful forms.
I do not doubt they are gods,
for they are not men.

"They bear garlands of beautiful flowers,
ointments and scarves of silk;
they wait respectfully.
Without any doubt, O King,
they come to see the young prince;
these gods higher than other gods
come to render homage."

These words fill the king with the greatest joy:
"Go tell their lordships to enter the palace.
Such supernatural power is in no way that of men,
if you speak truly of their virtues and their actions."

The gatekeeper returns to the gods,
palms joined in respect:
"At the invitation of the Master of Men,
may Your Lordships enter."
Joyous, with delighted hearts,
bearing in their hands the most beautiful garlands,
the gods enter the palace of the king,
itself like the abode of the long-lived gods.

When the highest of gods enter the palace,
the king himself arises,
with palms joined together, and says:
"These thrones have been prepared for you.
Pray, your benevolent Lordships, please be seated."

Free from arrogance and pride, they sit patiently.
"Hear, O King, why we have come.
Your son has been born with a great sign of merit;
we wish to see him,
the one born with beautiful feet.

"We know the ways of living beings,
we know the conduct and the characteristics
of those with the best signs.
O Best of Kings, cast aside all sadness, and let us see
the one whose body is well-adorned with signs."

The king and the young prince's attendants
all gather around joyously
to pick up the child who shines so brightly.
And when the child is carried over the threshold
into the presence of the long-haired gods,
the three thousand worlds begin to tremble.

Seeing the feet of the Guide of the World,
seeing the copper-red fingernails
on the splendid one with the unblemished body,
the long-haired gods, the highest of gods,
swiftly arise and bow their heads
to the feet of the one with stainless brilliance.

"We have seen the signs, we have seen his glory,
we have seen the crown of his head shining with merit.
Light shines forth from the tuft of hair between his brows,
brilliant and spotless with splendor.
There can be no doubt: after conquering Māra,
he will attain supreme Enlightenment."

And so the gods in this way praise him,
the one marked with excellent qualities,

the one free from the fettering passions.
Gazing upon the one
whose virtues dispel the shadows of ignorance,
they know the Jewel of Beings has arrived,
he who will clear away the fettering passions,
he who will put aside birth, old age, and death.

"The whole of the three worlds is burning,
tormented by the three fires
fueled by the objects of the senses, by passions, by desire.
But you will relieve the suffering of emotionality.
Having spread the cloud of the Dharma
over the three thousand worlds,
you will pour down the rain of immortality.

"Your words are full of love and compassion,
and your speech is soft;
your voice rings out with the sweet accents of Brahmā,
going straight to the heart.
O Bhagavat, you will cause
the great voice of a Buddha to be heard,
and quickly make known the precepts
throughout all the three thousand worlds.

"You will subdue the masses of miserable tīrthikas,
those with views opposed to the truth,
those who are tangled in the bonds
of attachment to existence.
When they hear the teachings
of Emptiness and dependence on causes,
they will flee like packs of jackals
at the roar of a lion.

"You clear away the darkness of ignorance,
the thick cloud of the fettering passions.

The Being has appeared
whose light of wisdom illuminates all things.
With the light of wisdom and the ray of understanding,
dispel the great darkness of the world!

"Abundant are the benefits for gods and men
when such a pure being appears in the world.
A perfectly purified jewel of beings,
he will close off the lower paths
and open the paths of the gods."

Showering heavenly flowers on the city of Kapila,
the gods circumambulate three times
and praise the child with respect, saying aloud:
"It is the Buddha! The excellent Buddha!"
And the host of gods returns to the heavens,
giving thanks.

The Seventh Chapter
The Birth



Plate 8



Plate 8

देवकुलोपनयनपरिवर्तः

།ལྷ་ཁང་དུ་ཁྲེར་བའི་ལེའུ།

The Visit to the Temple

O MONKS, THE VERY NIGHT THE BODHISATTVA WAS BORN, twenty thousand baby girls were born into the families of the townsmen, into the families of the kṣatriyas, the brāhmins, and the mahāśālas. These children were presented by their parents to the Bodhisattva to be his attendants and to serve him. King Śuddhodana also offered twenty thousand young women to attend and serve the Bodhisattva. Friends, advisers, and relatives on both the father's and the mother's side likewise offered twenty thousand young girls, as did the king's inner circle of counselors.

At this time, O monks, the eldest men and women among the Śākyas assembled to advise King Śuddhodana that it was time for the young prince to be taken to the temple to pray to the gods.

"It is good that this take place!" replied the king. And he called for the streets of the town to be decorated: "Beautify the crossroads, the public squares, and the roads where the chariots will pass. Put out of sight the ill-omened ones: the

one-eyed, the hunchbacks, the deaf, the blind, the mute. Remove from sight the deformed or disfigured, and those with imperfect organs. Fill the air with auspicious sounds! Ring the bells and sound the drums as a sign of benediction; make harmonies with the most melodious instruments; let the people decorate with care the gates of the city; let all the kings from the outlying regions assemble, as well as all of the people of Kapila—the merchants, the householders, the counselors, the gatekeepers, and all the servants. Let them harness the chariots of the maidens; let them fill the urns. Assemble the brāhmins who recite the prayers, and decorate the temples of the gods."

O monks, when everything had been done as the king ordered, King Śuddhodana entered his palace and told Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī to dress the young prince in finery so that they might take him to the temple.

"Very well!" Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī replied. But while she was dressing the young prince in fine clothes, he questioned the sister of his mother with unwrinkled brow: "Mother, where are you taking me?" he asked in the mildest of tones. And she replied: "To the temple of the gods, my son." At that, the young prince smiled and spoke these verses to his aunt:

"When I was born, the three thousand worlds were shaken;
Śakra and Brahmā, the asuras, the mahoragas,
Candra and Sūrya, as well as Vaiśravaṇa and Kumāra
all bowed their heads at my feet and did homage to me.

"What god is so distinguished
by his superiority over me, O mother,
that you take me to him today?
I am the god above the gods, superior to all the gods;
no god is like me—how could there be a higher?

"Yet I will conform to the custom of the world
and go to the temple, O mother.
When they see my miraculous activities,
the delighted crowd will offer homage
and show great respect;
gods and men will all agree: 'He is a god of gods.' "

O monks, when the child's chariot was prepared and decorated, King Śuddhodana took him in his arms. Attended by brāhmins, merchants, householders, and advisers, by the kings of the outlying fortresses, by gatekeepers and servants, friends and relatives, they went forth into the beautifully adorned crossroads, the streets, and the public squares. The smoke of incense drifted along the flower-strewn road. Horses, elephants, chariots, and foot soldiers marched to the sound of many instruments, while parasols, banners, and standards fluttered in the breeze. Gods by the hundreds of thousands drew the chariot of the young Bodhisattva, while hundreds of thousands of niyutas of koṭis of devaputras and apsarases hovered in the sky, tossing down flowers and playing sweet music.

With great royal ceremony and proud display, King Śuddhodana led the prince into the temple of the gods. As soon as the Bodhisattva set his right foot in the temple, the

statues of the gods, including Śiva, Skanda, Nārāyaṇa, Kubera, Candra, Sūrya, Vaiśravaṇa, Śakra, Brahmā, the Guardians of the World, and others, rose from their places and bowed at the feet of the Bodhisattva.

Seeing this, gods and men by the hundreds of thousands cried out with admiration and delight, waving banners in the air. The great city of Kapilavastu, the first among cities, trembled in six ways. Heavenly flowers fell like rain; instruments by the hundreds of thousands played without being touched; and all the gods whose images were found in the temple showed themselves in person and pronounced these verses:

"Meru, king of mountains, the greatest of mountains,
would never bow down to the mustard seed;
the ocean, home of the kings of the nāgas,
would never bow down to a puddle of water;
the brilliant sun and moon
would never bow down to a firefly.
How can the Lineaged One,
endowed with virtues, with wisdom and merit,
bow down to the gods?

"The gods and men of the three thousand worlds
are like the mustard seed, the puddle of water, the firefly.
The Supreme One of the world
is like Mount Meru, like the ocean, like the sun and moon.
Paying homage to him, the world obtains as reward
heavenly bliss and final liberation."

O monks, as they saw the Bodhisattva entering into the temple of the gods, thirty-two hundreds of thousands of devaputras aspired toward matchless, perfect, and complete Enlightenment.

And there, O monks, are the causes and there are the circumstances in which the Bodhisattva was escorted to the temple of the gods.

The Eighth Chapter
The Visit to the Temple

Plate 9



Plate 9

आभरणपरिवर्तः

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The Jewelry

O MONKS, DURING THE TIME OF HASTA, the lunar mansion which precedes Citrā, a brāhmin named Udāyana, the father of Udāyin, attended by five hundred brāhmins, sought audience with King Śuddhodana: "O Royal One," he said to the king, "it is time that ornaments be made for the young prince." The king replied: "Very well! Let such ornaments be made."

King Śuddhodana then had five hundred sets of jewelry made by five hundred Śākyas: ornaments for the hands, the feet, the head, and the neck; seal rings, earrings, and bracelets for the upper arm; belts of gold, golden cloth, nets with little bells and nets of pearls, shoes ornamented with jewels, scarves decorated with various precious things, and golden bracelets, necklaces, and diadems.

The ornaments were finished at the time of the conjunction with the constellation Puṣya, and the brāhmins came into the presence of King Śuddhodana, saying: "Sire, let the young prince be adorned!"

The king said: "You may honor and ornament the young prince with the jewelry I have had made for him." The

brāhmins replied: "For seven days and seven nights, let the young prince wear our jewelry; that will be reward enough for us."

When the night had come to an end and the sun had risen, the Bodhisattva was taken into the garden called Vimalavyūha, where Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī held the young prince in her arms. Eighty thousand women and five thousand brāhmins as well as ten thousand young girls came before the Bodhisattva to gaze upon his face. There in the garden, the jewelry made by order of the fortunate king of the Śākyas was placed on the Bodhisattva. But no sooner were the ornaments put in place than the splendor of his body outshone them. Just as a drop of ink does not shine, glitter, or sparkle next to gold from the river of Jambu, so these jewels lost their shine next to the splendor of the Bodhisattva's body. Like the sparkle of the inkdrop, the beauty of the ornaments faded away.

Vimala, the majestic goddess of the garden, appeared before the crowd and addressed these verses to King Śuddhodana and the great assembly of Śākyas:

"If all the land of the three thousand worlds,
including the cities and villages,
were filled and covered with pure and brilliant gold,
a single grain of gold from Jambu would eclipse them:
next to the gold of Jambu, no other gold can shine.

"Even if this entire earth
were as brilliant as the gold from Jambu,

it would lose its shine, it would lose its splendor,
it would lose its sparkle next to the Guide of the World
when, filled with modesty and majesty,
he lets a single ray escape his pores.
Next to the radiance of the Sugata,
the Protector of the World,
gold cannot shine; it becomes like ink.

"So it is with the jewels
adorning the one who is unblemished,
the one filled with a hundred virtues:
placed on him the jewels cannot shine.

"The brightness of the moon and sun,
the brightness of the stars,
even the radiance of the maṇi stone,
and the light of Śakra and Brahmā
lose their brilliance
next to the majesty of this one.
Bearing the signs which are the fruits of former virtue,
what need does he have of common ornaments,
the work of others?
Let the ornaments be removed!
Do not trouble the one who makes wise the ignorant;
the one with a mind so great
has no need of artificial ornaments.
Give away these jewels!
Seek the radiance which is truly pure and spotless."

Chandaka was born in the palace
at the same time as the prince;
he would be well ornamented with these jewels.

The hearts of the astonished Śākyas filled with the greatest joy, and they thought: "The prosperity of the son of the Śākya family will be supreme and extensive!" Having spoken, the goddess showered flowers on the Bodhisattva and disappeared from the garden.

The Ninth Chapter
The Jewelry



Plate 10

[illegible] filled with the great-
[illegible] prosperity of the son of the
[illegible] will be supreme and extensive!" Having spo-
[illegible] flowers on the Bodhisattva and
[illegible] from the garden.

The Ninth Chapter
The Jewelry





Plate 10

लिपिशालासंदर्शनपरिवर्तः

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The Visit to the Schoolroom

O MONKS, WHEN THE YOUNG PRINCE HAD GROWN OLDER, having proferred a hundred thousand blessings, he went forth to the schoolroom, surrounded by ten thousand children. While eight hundred thousand musical instruments played and flowers rained down, ten thousand chariots filled with gold and silver and ten thousand chariots filled with delicious food distributed goods everywhere: in the middle of the great city of Kapila, in the streets, at the crossroads, along the chariot routes, in the public squares, and at the markets.

One hundred thousand young women wearing their finest ornaments stood on galleries and balconies, at gates, by oval windows, and in the pavilions of palaces, to gaze upon the Bodhisattva and toss flowers. Eight thousand beautiful young girls, well-adorned with ornaments of all kinds, each holding a jewel in her hands as an auspicious sign, walked in front of the Bodhisattva, sprinkling the road with perfumes.

Gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas appeared in the sky, showing the upper part of their bodies and tossing flowers, silk cloths,

and garlands. Thus did the Bodhisattva walk to the schoolroom with King Śuddhodana, preceded by all the attendants of the Śākyas, surrounded by great glory and pomp.

As soon as the Bodhisattva had entered the schoolroom, the children's teacher, Viśvāmitra, unable to bear the majesty and the splendor of the Bodhisattva, fell prostrate upon the ground. Seeing the teacher thus, a devaputra of the Tuṣita realm named Śubhāṅga extended his right hand and raised him up. Standing in the expanse of the sky, he spoke these verses to the king and to the great assembly:

"For several koṭis of kalpas,
the Bodhisattva has been expert
in all the Śāstras found in the world,
in numbers, scripts, and calculations,
in combinations of the elements,
and all the immeasurable applications of the worldly arts.

"Still, conforming to custom,
he has come to the schoolroom,
so that many children may mature completely
in the best of all vehicles.
He has come for the instruction of even the well-educated,
to lead hundreds of thousands of beings to Immortality.

"He knows the way of the Four Noble Truths
which are beyond saṁsāra.
He knows how everything arises dependent on causes;
he has the cool nature

of one who knows the cessation of the aggregates.
Having such knowledge, would he not know his letters?

"There is no teacher above him in all the three worlds;
among gods and men he is truly superior.
For koṭis of kalpas he has been familiar with scripts
whose names you do not even know.

"At this very moment, this pure one knows
the purposes and dispositions of all sentient beings;
the way of the invisible and formless he knows as well.
Would he not know writing in the visible form of letters?"

Having spoken, the devaputra scattered many heavenly flowers to honor the Bodhisattva and disappeared. Then the nursemaids and attendants took their places, and the rest of the Śākyas departed, with Śuddhodana at their head.

The Bodhisattva took up an exquisitely colored writing tablet made of the essence of Uraga sandalwood, strewn with gold dust and decorated all around with precious stones, and spoke to his teacher Viśvāmitra: "Well, master, which of the sixty-four scripts will you teach me?"

"The Brāhmī, Kharoṣṭhī, or Puṣkarasārī scripts? Or the scripts of Aṅga, Vaṅga, or Magadha? Or the Maṅgalya, Mānuṣya, or Aṅgulī scripts? Or the scripts of Śakāri, Brahmavalī, Drāviḍa, Kināri, Dākṣina, or Ugra? Or the scripts known as Saṅkhyā, Anuloma, or Ardhadhanus? Or the scripts of Darada, Khāsya, Cīna, or Hūṇa? Or those known as Madhyākṣaravistara or Puṣpa? Or the scripts of the devas, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, kinnaras, mahoragas,

asuras, or garuḍas? Or the scripts known as Mṛgacakra or Cakra? Or the scripts of the Vāyumaruts, Bhaumadevas, or the Antarīkṣadevas? Or the scripts of Uttarakurudvīpa, Aparagodāna, or Pūrvavideha? Or the scripts known as Utkṣepa, Nikṣepa, Vikṣepa, Prakṣepa, Sāgara, Vajra, or Lekhapratilekha? Or the scripts Anudruta, Śāstrāvarta, Gaṇanāvarta, Utkṣepāvarta, Nikṣepāvarta, Pādalikhita, or Dviruttarapadasaṁdhi? The Yāvaddaśottarapadasaṁdhi, Madhyāhariṇī, Sarvarutasaṁgrahaṇi, Vidyānuloma, or Vimiśrita scripts? Or the scripts known as Ṛṣitapastapta, Rocamānadhāraṇīprekṣaṇa, Gaganaprekṣinī, or those known as Sarvauṣadhiniṣyanda, Sarvāsarasaṁgrahaṇi, or Sarvabhūtarutagrahaṇi?

"Which of these sixty-four scripts will you teach me?" Laughing with astonishment, Viśvāmitra, the teacher of the children, unaffected by pride or vanity, recited this verse:

"How wonderful is this pure being,
learned in all the Śāstras,
who nonetheless comes to the schoolroom.
In the world, he follows the customs of the world.

"He has the knowledge of scripts
whose names I do not even know;
nevertheless he has come to the schoolroom!

"Although one can see his face,
the crown of his head is so exalted,
it seems to disappear!

"How could I instruct the one
who has attained unsurpassed knowledge of scripts?

"He is truly a god above gods, superior to all the gods,
the lord greater than all gods.
Outstanding among all others, he is without equal;
the incomparable Saint of all the worlds!

"Through his power,
distinguished by the use of knowledge and means,
this friend of all the world
will instruct even the wise."

O monks, ten thousand children learned writing together with the Bodhisattva. Through the Bodhisattva's blessing, when the children pronounced the syllable A, the sound came out: anityaḥ sarvasaṁskāraḥ, all aggregates are impermanent.

When the syllable Ā was pronounced,
the sound came out: ātmaparahita, beyond self.

The syllable I: indriyavaipulya,
the extensive development of the faculties.

The syllable Ī: ītibahula,
the abundance of calamities and disease.

The syllable U: upadravabahula,
beings abound in destruction.

The syllable Ū: ūnasattvaṁ jagat,
the world has nothing attractive.

The syllable E: eṣaṇāsamutthānadośa,
pain is born from desire.

The syllable AI: airyāpathaḥ shreyān,
the virtues of the noble path.

The syllable O: oghottara,
the way out of the ocean of saṁsāra.

The syllable AU: aupapāduka, supernatural power.

The character AṀ: amoghotpatti, non-possessing.

The character AḤ: astaṅgamaṇa, the West.

The syllable KA: karmavipākāvatāraṇa,
the complete maturity of deeds.

The syllable KHA: khasamasarvadharma,
all dharmas are like space.

The syllable GA:
gambhīradharmapratītyasamutpādavartaṇa,
realization of profound dependent origination.

The syllable GHA:
ghanapaṭalāvidyāmohāndhakāravidhamana,
destruction of confusion, ignorance, and obscured vision.

The syllable ṄGA: aṅgaviśuddhi,
complete purification of the branches of knowledge.

The syllable CA: caturāryasatyapatha,
the way of the Four Noble Truths.

The syllable CHA: chandarāgaprahāṇa,
the abandoning of desire and passion.

The syllable JA: jarāmaraṇasamatikramaṇa,
the complete bypassing of old age and death.

The syllable JHA: jhaṣadhvajavaranigrahaṇa,
the weakening of the one who takes the fish as his symbol.

The syllable ÑA: jñāpana, that which makes known.

The syllable ṬA: paṭhopatchedana,
the complete cutting off of the path.

The syllable ṬHA: ṭhapanīyapraśṇa,
the request for what must be collected.

The syllable ḌA: ḍamaramāranigrahaṇa,
the destruction of Māra and those who cause dissension.

The syllable ḌHA: mīḍhaviṣayā, the impure regions.

The syllable ṆA: neṇukleśā,
the residues of the fettering passions.

The syllable TA: tathātāsaṁbheda,
the nondifferentiation of Suchness.

The syllable THA: thāmabalavegavaiśāradya,
energy, strength, fearlessness, courage.

The syllable DA: dānadamasaṁyamasaurabhya,
giving, training, restraint, and valor.

The syllable DHA: dhanam āryāṇāṁ saptavidhi,
the seven riches of the Saints.

The syllable NA: nāmarūpaparijñāna,
the perfect knowledge of name and form.

The syllable PA: paramārtha, the ultimate truth.

The syllable PHA: phalaprāptisākśātkriyā,
manifesting the acquisition of the fruit.

The syllable BA: bandhanamokṣa,
the deliverance from bondage.

The syllable BHA: bhavavibhava,
existence and emancipation.

The syllable MA: maḍamānopaśamana,
the suppression of pride and conceit.

The syllable YA: yathāvaddharmapratiṣeda,
penetrating the Dharma as it is.

The syllable RA: ratyaratiparamārtharati,
the absence of pleasure in pleasure as truest pleasure.

The syllable LA: latācedana, cutting the vines.

The syllable VA: varayānavara, the excellent vehicle.

The syllable ŚA: śamathavipaśyanā,
calm and intense insight.

The syllable ṢA: ṣaḍāyatananigrahaṣaḍabhijñājñānāvāpti,
the restraint of the six senses and the acquisition of the six superior knowledges.

The syllable SA: sarvajñājñānābhisambodhana,
the complete acquisition of perfect knowledge.

The syllable HA: hatakleśavirāga,
the absence of desire and the destruction of emotionality.

When the last syllable, KṢA, was pronounced, the phrase came out: kṣaṇaparyantābhilāṣa sarvadharma, with longings instantly brought to an end, the entire Dharma has been expounded.

O monks, while the children were pronouncing the alphabet, countless hundreds of thousands of principal doors of the Dharma appeared, all through the power of the Bodhisattva. Thirty-two thousand children were steadily

brought to complete maturation by the Bodhisattva's presence in the schoolroom, and their thoughts were directed toward perfect and complete Enlightenment.

Here is the cause, and here is the circumstance for which the Bodhisattva, although learned himself, visited the schoolroom.

The Tenth Chapter
The Visit to the Schoolroom



Plate 11

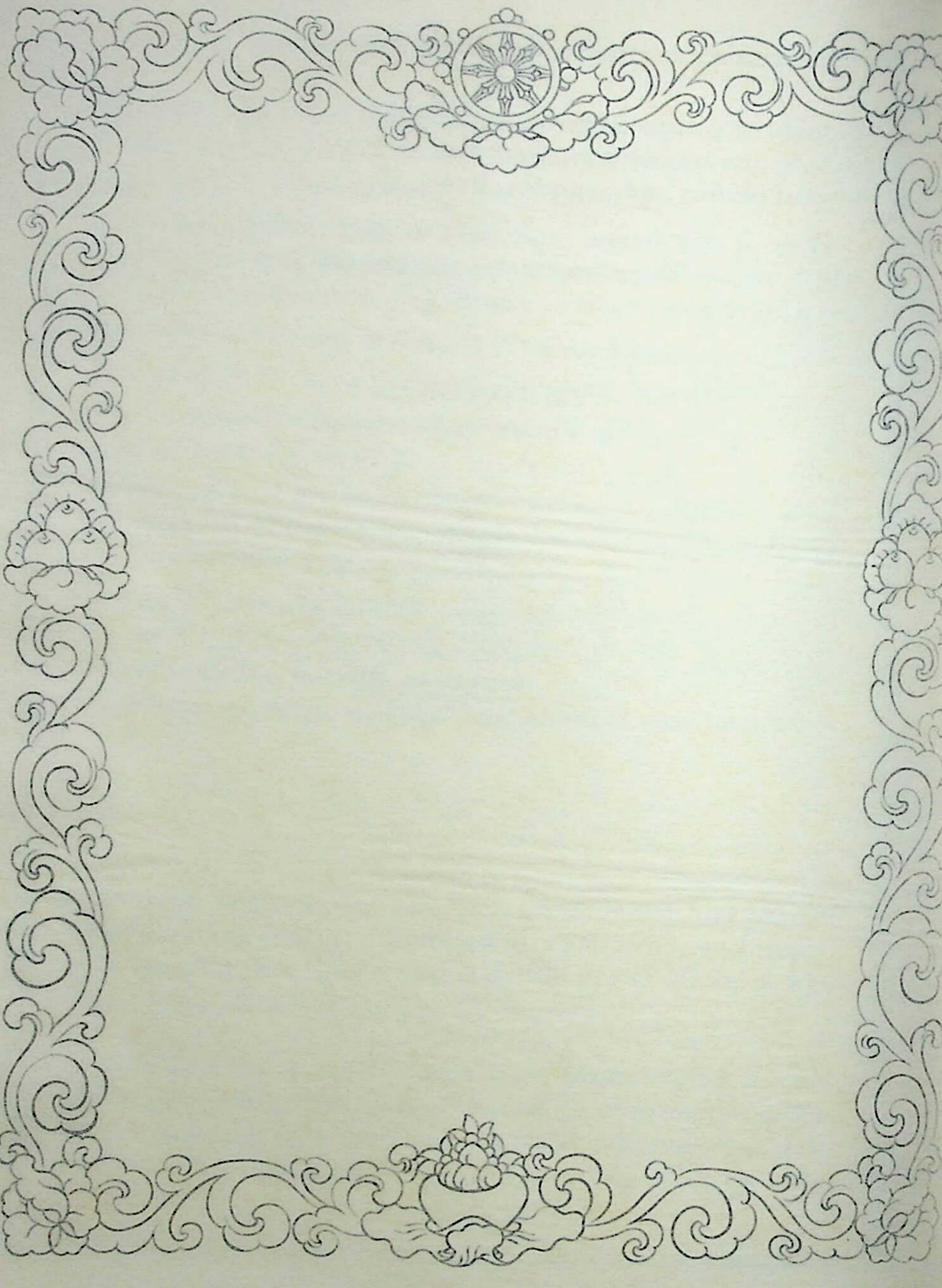




Plate 11

कृषिग्रामपरिवर्तः

།ཞིང་པའི་གྲོང་གི་ལེའུ།

The Farming Village

O MONKS, WHEN THE PRINCE WAS A LITTLE OLDER, he went on one occasion with some other young men, the sons of counselors, to inspect a farming village. Having looked about the village, he went off into a grove of trees at the far end of a field that was being plowed. All alone, the Bodhisattva wandered here and there until he saw a jambu tree, beautiful and pleasant to behold. He sat down in the shade of the jambu tree with his legs crossed, and there under the tree, he attained one-pointedness of mind. Having so fixed his mind, he was free from non-virtue and obscuration and achieved the first level of meditation, in which there is observation and reflection, a meditation endowed with joy and pleasure born of solitude. There he remained steady.

As he deepened his concentration, free from observation and reflection, his thoughts narrowed to one thread, and he reached the second level of meditation, in which there is joy and pleasure.

Letting go of attachment to pleasure, he abided in equanimity, in which there is awakened awareness and

consciousness, as well as experience of great joy—an equanimity described by the Āryas as dwelling in joy with great mindfulness and equanimity. Reaching this third level of meditation, free from pleasure, he remained steady.

When he let go of even joy, as well as previous suffering, all impressions of joy and sadness disappeared, and he reached the fourth level of meditation, where there is neither joy nor misery, where equanimity and awareness are completely pure; and he remained there.

At that time, five foreign ṛṣis, possessing the five superior knowledges and supernatural power, were traveling through the sky from south to north. Soaring above the dense grove of trees, they found themselves held back and unable to advance. Irritated and trembling with impatience, they uttered these verses:

"We have crossed over the precious stones and diamonds
on the high and extensive summit of Meru
as easily as elephants push over tangled clumps of trees.

"Rising into the sky we have soared
above the dwellings of the yakṣas and gandharvas,
above the very city of the gods.
Yet reaching this dense grove, we have lost our strength!
What great power obstructs our magic?"

Then the goddess of the forest
addressed these verses to the ṛṣis:

"The son of the king of the Śākyas,
descendant of the family of a king of kings,

the Lord of the World,
the Learned One with a face like the moon,
the one with the lustrous color of a lotus in full bloom,
and who shines with the brilliance of the rising sun,

"Has entered this grove
and given himself over entirely to meditation.
The gods, the gandharvas, the masters of the nāgas,
and the yakṣas all pay their respects to him.
Since his merit has grown great
through hundreds of koṭis of lives,
his power overwhelms your supernatural abilities."

Looking beneath them, they saw the young prince brilliant with majesty and radiant with splendor, and they reflected: Who can it be, seated here? Could it be Vaiśravaṇa, the master of riches; or Māra, the god of desire; or the master of the mahoragas? Could it be Indra, the lightning-bearer; or Rudra, the lord of the kumbhāṇḍas; or Kṛṣṇa of great energy? Is it Candra, the moon, or Sūrya, the sun with his thousand rays? Or can this be a Cakravartin king? And they pronounced this verse:

"With a body so like Vaiśravaṇa's,
this must be Kubera, or it may be Rahula.
Or is it the Bearer of the Vajra?
Or Pratimā or Candra or Sūrya?
Or perhaps Kāma, the lord of desire?
He has also the likeness of Kṛṣṇa.
But since he is so majestic,

with great signs marking his body,
perhaps he is a spotless Buddha."

Then the goddess of the grove
addressed this verse to the ṛṣis:
"Whatever majesty there may be in Vaiśravaṇa,
in Sahesrekṣaṇa, or the Four Guardians of the World,
whatever majesty belongs to the master of the asuras,
or to Brahmā, master of the Sahā worlds, or to the planets,
truly it does not approach the splendor
of the son of the Śākyas."

When they heard the words of the goddess, the ṛṣis descended to earth and saw the Bodhisattva completely still in meditation. Seeing him shine like beams of light, they praised him with these verses:

One said:
"In the world aflame with the fire of the passions,
a lake of deliverance has appeared;
he will obtain the Dharma
and so refresh the world."

Another said:
"In the world darkened by ignorance,
a torch of deliverance has appeared;
he will obtain the Dharma
and enlighten all beings."

Another said:
"In the difficult passage across the ocean of suffering,
the best of ships has appeared;

he will obtain the Dharma
and carry all beings to the other shore."

Another said:
"For those bound by the chains of the emotions,
the Liberator has appeared;
he will obtain the Dharma
and deliver all sentient beings."

Another said:
"For those tormented by old age and sickness,
the Best Physician has appeared;
he will obtain the Dharma
and release them from birth and death."

After praising the Bodhisattva and circumambulating him three times, the ṛṣis departed through the skies.

Meanwhile, King Śuddhodana, having noticed that the Bodhisattva was missing, inquired concerning his absence, asking: "Where has the young prince gone? I do not see him anywhere." So a great crowd of people spread out in all directions to look for the prince.

Shortly, one of the King's advisers caught sight of the Bodhisattva in the shade of the jambu tree, seated with his legs crossed, deep in meditation. Now, throughout the day, the shadows of all the trees had moved, but the shadow of the jambu tree had not left the body of the Bodhisattva. Seeing this, the adviser was filled with astonishment. His heart transported with joy, quickly, quickly, in great haste, he went to King Śuddhodana and addressed these verses to him:

"See, O King, the young prince is there
in the shadow of the jambu tree, deep in meditation!
Like Śākra, like Brahmā,
he shines with splendor and majesty.

"The shadow of the tree does not move;
it stays in place,
sheltering the one with the best of signs,
the greatest of men,
seated beneath it in deep meditation."

When the king approached the jambu tree and saw the Bodhisattva, brilliant with splendor and majesty, he uttered this verse:

"There he sits, like a fire blazing on a mountaintop,
like the moon surrounded by clusters of stars.
My whole body trembles to see him deep in meditation,
glowing like a brilliant lamp."

Bowing to the feet of the Bodhisattva,
he recited this verse:

"Muni! Just as I bowed to you at your birth,
now that I see you resplendent and deep in meditation,
once, even twice, I bow at your feet,
O Guide, O Protector."

At this moment, some children passed by, pulling a small chair and making a commotion. The king's advisers scolded them: "You mustn't make any noise." And the children

asked: "What have we done wrong?" To which the adviser replied:

"The disc of the sun,
which dispels the darkness, has moved,
but the shadow of the tree
does not abandon Siddhārtha,
the one with the splendor of the sky,
the one bearing the most beautiful signs,
the king's son sitting motionless like a mountain,
deep in meditation."

Concerning this it is said:

Spring had passed,
the first month of summer had arrived,
bringing flowers, budding young boughs,
and the resounding cries of herons,
peacocks, parrots, and jays.
And the sons of the Śākyas strolled forth in great number.

Chandaka says to the young Bodhisattva:
"Come let us go out!
Let us go to see the forests and groves!
Why stay inside like a brāhmin?
Let us gather our friends,
and invite the girls as well!"

So at noon, the Perfectly Pure One,
surrounded by five hundred young people,
sallies forth to the farming village,
not telling his father or mother.

Seeing the farmers work in the fields,
and moved by the suffering, the Bodhisattva exclaims:

"How miserable is all that is composite,
for it produces numerous sorrows!"

Now in the village is a jambu tree,
with many spreading boughs.
Into its shade, he withdraws,
his mind well-disciplined.
He spreads out grasses to form a rug.
Sitting cross-legged, his body erect,
he enters deeply the four levels
of meditation, contemplating virtue.

Traveling through the sky,
five ṛṣis arrive above the jambu tree,
but they can go no farther.
Putting aside their impatience and pride,
they agree to investigate:

"After crossing Mount Meru, the greatest of mountains,
after soaring past all obstructions,
into the horizon and beyond, we were traveling rapidly.
But now we cannot pass beyond this tree.
What can be the cause?"

Descending to the surface of the earth,
they come to rest.
There they catch sight of the son of the Śākyas:

He is sitting at the foot of the jambu tree
cross-legged, deep in meditation, shining with splendor
like gold from the rivers of Jambu.

Astonished, they raise their joined palms to their heads,
and bow at the feet of the Bodhisattva.
"Excellent One, Well-born,
who causes the greatest happiness in the world,

quickly become a Buddha
and train all beings for Immortality."

The sun has moved, but not the shadow of the tree;
it does not leave the body of the Sugata;
it envelops the best of trees like a lotus leaf.
And gods by the thousands, palms joined in reverence,
bow to the feet of the one with unshakable resolve.

Śuddhodana, looking everywhere in the palace,
asks after his son, and the aunt replies:
"I have searched in all places, but he cannot be found—
we must learn, O King, where the young prince has gone."

In haste Śuddhodana questions the servants;
in haste he asks the gatekeeper as well,
and the others in the palace: "Was my son seen leaving?"

"Know, sire, that your handsome son
has gone to the farming village."

The king hurries out, with the Śākyas beside him,
and soon catches sight of the farming village,
clothed in the brilliance of niyutas of koṭis of rising suns.
And so he sees him, dazzling and majestic,
the one who comes to the aid of all beings.

The king takes off the insignia of royalty,
the diadem, the sword, and the slippers,
and with hands raised to his head, he utters great praise:
"Yes, magnanimous ṛṣis, you spoke true words.
It is clear: the young prince will leave home
for supreme Enlightenment."

Twelve thousand gods filled with faith
and five hundred Śākyas as well,
all see the supernatural power of the Sugata,

that ocean of virtues;
and with firm resolution,
they produce the Thought of Perfect Enlightenment.

The one who has caused
the three thousand worlds to tremble
comes out of meditation with deep awareness.
With the melodious voice of Brahmā,
he addresses his father:
"In plowing the field of the mind, O father,
do not seek from another.

"If one seeks gold, one can make gold rain down;
if one seeks raiment, one offers raiment;
if one seeks grain, one can cause grain to pour forth.
Lord of Men, apply this to everyone."

After speaking thus with great authority
to his father and his followers,
the Perfectly Pure One returns to the finest of cities,
and conforming to custom, remains in the city.
But his mind is occupied with departure from home.

The Eleventh Chapter
The Farming Village

...of Perfect Enlightenment
...
...worlds to tremble
...ation with deep awareness
...voice of Brahmā,
...father:
...the field of the mind, O father,
...another.

...gold, one can make gold rain down
...raiment, one offers raiment;
...grain, one can cause grain to pour forth
...of Men, apply this to everyone."

...speaking thus with great authority
...father and his followers,
...Perfectly Pure One returns to the finest of cities,
And conforming to custom, remains in the city,
But his mind is occupied with departure from home.

The Eleventh Chapter
The Farming Village



Plate 12

शिल्पसंदर्शनपरिवर्तः

། སྒྱུ་རྩལ་བསྟན་པའི་ལེའུ།

Skill in the Worldly Arts

O MONKS, WHEN THE PRINCE HAD GROWN STILL OLDER, King Śuddhodana met in the council hall with the assembly of Śākyas. The eldest of the Śākyas spoke thus to King Śuddhodana:

"O King, you know what has been predicted for the young Sarvārthasiddha by the brāhmins who know the signs and by the gods whose knowledge is certain. If the prince leaves his family, he will be a perfect and fulfilled Tathāgata Arhat Buddha. But if he does not leave home, he will be a Cakravartin king, a conqueror, a king devoted to the Dharma, possessing the seven precious jewels: the wheel, the elephant, the horse, the maṇi stone, the queen, the chancellor, and the counselor. He will have a full thousand sons, great heroes, powerfully built and full of courage, conquerors of great armies. Having subjugated this great earth without using weapons or force, he will govern by means of the Dharma.

"This is why the young prince must be married. Once he is married and surrounded by women, he will know such pleasure that he will not leave his family, and in this way the

succession of Cakravartin kings surely will be maintained. The Śākyas will be respected and not subject to the scorn of the frontier kings."

King Śuddhodana replied: "If this be so, pray see to finding a young woman who is agreeable to the prince." Immediately, the five hundred Śākyas said to each other: "My daughter would best suit the young prince! My daughter is the one." The king replied: "The prince is difficult to please. Let us therefore ask him which young woman would most appeal to him."

When the assembly spoke to the prince about the matter, the prince replied: "In seven days, I will give my answer." And the Bodhisattva began to think: "I know the evils of desire are endless; they are the root of sorrow, accompanied by regrets, struggles, and hostility; they are frightful, like poison ivy, like fire, like the blade of a sword. For the qualities of desire, I have neither taste nor inclination, and I am not at all happy to be among women; I would rather dwell in a forest, silent, with my mind calmed by the happiness of meditation and contemplation."

After reflecting upon this situation with skillful means, he thought of bringing beings to complete maturation. Seized with great compassion, he recited these verses:

"In the midst of the murky swamp, lotuses grow;
in the midst of the mass of men, the king receives homage.
Bodhisattvas obtain the best environment
when they train hundreds of millions of beings
for Immortality.

"All previous wise Bodhisattvas have been shown
with a wife and a son and a following of women.
And yet they were not agitated by desire,
nor did they turn from the delights of contemplation.
I, too, will follow this example.

"A common woman who lacked good conduct
or qualities such as truthfulness
would never suit me.
The woman who would truly delight me
is modest and very pure,
in body and birth, in family and race."

And he writes in verses a list of these virtues,
concluding: "If there is a young woman
like the one I describe, O my father, I will be happy.
I do not want a common, uninstructed creature.
Choose for me the one whose qualities I now describe:

"May she be in the flower of youth and beauty,
and yet without pride.
May she act with benevolent spirit like a mother or a sister.
Accustomed to giving gifts to śramaṇas and brāhmins,
may she take pleasure in renunciation.
Such a wife, O my father, you may choose for me.

"May she be upright, without pride,
without meanness or bitterness,
without trickery, envy, or artifice.
May she be satisfied with her husband,
with no thought for another, even in dreams.
May she always be restrained and modest.

"Neither haughty nor presumptuous,
may she be as modest and lacking in pride as a slave.

May she have no passion for wine or rich food,
for music or perfume.
May she be free from covetousness
and satisfied with her lot.

"May she be firm in the truth,
neither silly, confused, nor proud,
but clothed in the garment of modesty.
May she be attracted neither to spectacles nor to feasts.
Constantly applying herself to the Dharma,
may she keep herself always pure
in body, speech, and mind.

"Not lured by sleep or laziness, untroubled by pride,
may she perform good actions with good judgment,
always practicing the Dharma.
She should respect her father- and mother-in-law
as spiritual teachers,
and be as good to all the servants
as she would be to herself.

"May she know, like a courtesan, the way of the Śāstras.
Like a mother, last to bed and first to rise,
may she act with benevolence and without affectation.
If such a woman exists, Master of Men,
choose her for me."

O monks, when King Śuddhodana heard these verses recited, he addressed himself to the brahmin priest: "Great Brāhmin, go at once to all the homes in the great city of Kapilavastu and investigate the young women. Bring to us the girl in whom these virtues stand out, be she the daughter of a kṣatriya, a brāhmin, a vaiśya, or a śūdra. Why?

The prince does not consider the family or the race; he looks only for the virtues." And the king uttered these verses:

"Bring me the one who possesses these virtues
whether daughter of brāhmin or kṣatriya,
of vaiśya or even of śūdra.

"My son is not dazzled by family or race;
real qualities and virtues are the source of his pleasure."

Therefore, O monks, the priest took the prince's list and went into the great city of Kapilavastu, going from one house to another, looking for a young woman endowed with such qualities. Still seeking in vain, he arrived at the dwelling of Daṇḍapāṇi of the Śākyas. There he spied a remarkably beautiful and gracious young woman whose lovely complexion delighted the eye. She was in the first flower of youth, neither too tall nor too short, neither too fat nor too thin, neither too pale nor too dark; indeed, she was a jewel among women.

Having touched lightly both feet of the brahmin priest, the young woman spoke to him thus: "Great Brāhmin, how can I serve you?" The priest replied to her with this verse:

"The son of Śuddhodana,
the prince endowed with greatest beauty,
the most splendid virtues, and the thirty-two signs,
has made a list of qualities:
she who has these qualities shall be his wife."

And he presented her the list of qualities written in verse. The young woman read the list and then looked up at him with a smile:

"Brāhmin, I have all the suitable qualities.
May this loving and handsome young man be my husband!
The prince has spoken; let there be no delay!
With an ordinary woman, he could not live."

The brahmin priest then returned to King Śuddhodana and related to him what had occurred: "Great King, I have seen a young woman who would be a match for the young prince." The king asked: "To what family does she belong?" The brāhmin replied: "Sire, she is the daughter of the Śākya Daṇḍāpaṇi."

Then King Śuddhodana reflected: "The young prince is difficult to please, being inclined toward the extremely good and beautiful. In general the feminine sex is not distinguished by virtue, though some would claim these qualities. So I will order lovely ornaments to be made for the young prince to bestow upon all the girls. The young man who catches the eye of the prince will stand out, and he shall have her for his wife." Such was his thought.

King Śuddhodana had fine ornaments made of gold and silver, of lapis lazuli and various other precious stones. Then he sounded a bell and had an announcement made in the great city of Kapilavastu: "In seven days, the prince will distribute lovely jewelry to all the young women. On that day all the young women are to meet in the assembly hall."

O monks, the seventh day having come, the Bodhisattva went to the assembly hall and seated himself on the throne. King Śuddhodana placed his aides in the hall and said to them: "Make known to me the girl who catches the eye of the prince."

O monks, all the young women in the great city of Kapilavastu hurried into the hall where the Bodhisattva was seated, eager to gaze upon him and to receive the lovely gifts. And so, monks, the Bodhisattva distributed the jewelry to all the young women, who, unable to endure the splendor and the majesty of the Bodhisattva, went off quickly, carrying the ornaments.

Then Gopā, the daughter of the Śākya Daṇḍapāṇi, surrounded and preceded by many women attendants, came into the assembly hall. But by this time, all the jewelry had been given away. Drawing near the Bodhisattva, she looked at him with steady gaze and with a smile stepped forward to speak: "O Prince, how have I offended you, that you scorn me?" "I do not scorn you," he said. "You are simply the last to arrive." And taking from his finger a ring which was worth more than a hundred thousand palas, Sarvārthasiddha gave it to her.

"O Prince, is it truly fitting for me to accept this gift from you?" she asked. "I have other jewels," he replied. "Take it! You must accept it." But she answered him: "I would not deprive the young prince of his jewelry; I have ornaments enough." And saying thus, the young woman withdrew.

Forthwith, King Śuddhodana's aides went to the king and reported what had occurred: "Sire, the daughter of the Śākya Daṇḍapāṇi, named Gopā, is the one on whom the

young prince fixed his eye; there was even a moment of conversation between them."

Hearing this, King Śuddhodana sent the brahmin priest to the Śākya Daṇḍapāṇi with this message: "Pray, give your young daughter in marriage to my son, the prince."

To this, Daṇḍapāṇi replied: "Lord, it is the custom of our family to give our daughters in marriage only to men skilled in the arts, and your son has grown up in luxury in the palace. If he does not excel in the arts, does not know the rules of fencing or archery or boxing or wrestling, how then can I give my daughter to him?"

These words were reported to the king, who considered: "Twice now have I been justly rebuked on this subject. Once before, I wondered why the young Śākyas were not coming to render homage to the prince, and they asked in return why they should render homage to one who was so indolent. Today it is again the same." And the king was overcome with distress.

When the Bodhisattva learned what had transpired, he went to the king, saying: "Sire, you are troubled. What is worrying you?" To which the king replied: "Young man, do not ask."

But the prince persisted: "It is always necessary to explain oneself." Three times, the Bodhisattva questioned King Śuddhodana, until the king finally explained the situation. At once the Bodhisattva reassured him: "Sire, is there a single person here in the city who can rival my dexterity and skill in the arts?"

Smiling broadly, the king questioned the Bodhisattva still further: "Could you, my son, prove your skill?" To

which the Bodhisattva answered: "Certainly, sire. Let all who excel in the arts assemble, and in their presence I will demonstrate my ability."

So King Śuddhodana sounded the bell and had an announcement made throughout the city of Kapilavastu: "In seven days the young Sarvārthasiddha will demonstrate his skill in the worldly arts. Let all who excel in the arts assemble."

On the seventh day, five hundred young Śākyas came together, and Gopā, the daughter of Daṇḍapāṇi, was promised as the prize for the victorious one: to the one who wins in fencing, in archery, in boxing, and in wrestling, she would belong.

The young Devadatta left the city ahead of all the others. As he left, he saw being led into the city a white elephant of great size destined for the Bodhisattva. Envious and drunk with pride at being a Śākya—drunk with his own strength as well—Devadatta seized the elephant's trunk in his left hand and, with a single blow from the palm of his right hand, killed him.

The young Sundarānanda went forth soon after and saw the elephant lying at the gate of the city. "By whom was this animal killed?" he asked. And the great crowd which had assembled there cried out: "Devadatta killed him!" At this Sundarānanda said: "Devadatta has acted badly." And taking the elephant by the tail, he dragged him outside the gate of the city.

Immediately after this, the Bodhisattva, riding past in his chariot, saw the elephant and asked: "By whom was he killed?" Told it was Devadatta, he replied: "Devadatta has

not acted properly. And by whom was the elephant dragged out of the city?" "By Sundarānanda," they replied. To which the Bodhisattva said: "Sundarānanda has done well. But this creature with its large body will fill the whole city with a foul odor when it decomposes."

Then the young prince, standing in his chariot, stretched out one foot. With his toe he took the elephant by the tail and cast him far away, to a distance of a krośa, past seven circles of ramparts and seven ditches that surrounded the city. Where the elephant landed a great indentation was made in the ground, which still today is called Hastigartā, the Ditch of the Elephant.

Upon seeing this, gods and men by the hundreds of thousands waved scarves and cheered with admiration and pleasure. The devaputras who reside in the expanse of the sky spoke these two verses:

"With the superb bearing of a king of elephants,
he seizes the king of elephants;
using only the toe of his foot,
he throws him far past the seven ramparts of the city.

"Without any doubt, he will seize those inflated with pride,
and using the strength of his intelligence and wisdom,
will throw them far past the city of rebirth."

And so, monks, five hundred young Śākyas went forth from the city to the place where their skill in the worldly arts was to be demonstrated. King Śuddhodana, preceded by the eldest of the Śākyas and surrounded by a multitude of people, arrived soon afterward, eager to compare the skill of the Bodhisattva with that of the other young Śākyas.

First, the young Śākyas skilled in writing contended with the Bodhisattva. The preceptor, Viśvāmitra, chosen as judge by the Śākyas, was told to determine which young man drew the finest letters or knew the greatest number of scripts, thereby distinguishing himself in writing.

After Viśvāmitra had witnessed the Bodhisattva's knowledge of scripts, he smiled and uttered these two verses:

"This pure being knows to perfection
the many scripts in all the worlds,
in both the worlds of men and the worlds of gods,
in the worlds of the gandharvas
and the worlds of the asuras.

"Neither you nor I even know the names of the scripts
or the letters known to this moon among men.
I am very sure of it; he is obviously the winner."

The Śākyas said: "Let the young man reveal his knowledge of mathematics; let him show the extent of his

ability." A Śākya named Arjuna, a great mathematician who had attained unsurpassed knowledge of numbers and calculations, was chosen as judge and asked to determine which of the young men was most distinguished in the knowledge of numbers.

Forthwith the Bodhisattva proposed a problem, and a young Śākya attempted to solve it, but he could not. Next two young Śākyas, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, even up to five hundred attempted to solve the problem, but they also could not do so.

So the Bodhisattva said to them: "Now you propose a problem, and I will solve it." So a young Śākya set forth a problem, but he could not perplex the Bodhisattva. After that, two young Śākyas, three, four, five, ten, twenty, thirty, forty, fifty, even up to five hundred Śākyas all at once proposed a problem, but the Bodhisattva solved them all. "Enough, enough of this contest," said the Bodhisattva. "All of you now, all together, propose a problem, and I will do it."

So the five hundred young Śākyas, with common agreement, suggested a calculation which had never been done before, and the Bodhisattva solved it easily. Thus were all the young Śākyas defeated; the Bodhisattva alone was successful.

And the great mathematician Arjuna, filled with admiration, recited these two verses:

"So quick is his mind,
that even five hundred young Śākyas, all together,
cannot match his knowledge of numbers.

"Such is his knowledge, his memory,
his intelligence, and his wisdom:
he is an ocean of knowledge.
Yet still he studies and learns!
How wonderful is his mind!"

The multitude of Śākyas was completely astonished; full of admiration, they shouted with a single voice: "Victory! Victory to the young Sarvārthasiddha!" Rising from their seats and joining their palms together respectfully, they all bowed down before the Bodhisattva, and addressed these words to King Śuddhodana: "The advantage is yours, O King! Your son is quick; he is swift and alert! How he rises to the challenge!"

King Śuddhodana then asked the Bodhisattva: "Can you, my son, rival the skill of the great mathematician Arjuna in the knowledge of mathematics?" "Sire, I can," he replied. So the Bodhisattva was told to show his ability.

The great mathematician Arjuna asked the Bodhisattva: "Young man, do you know the procedure of numeration called koṭiśatottarā, more than a hundred koṭis?" The Bodhisattva answered: "I do." "Well, then, how must one proceed to enumerate more than a hundred koṭis?"

The Bodhisattva replied: "A hundred koṭis is called ayuta; a hundred ayutas is called niyuta; a hundred niyutas is called kaṅkara; a hundred kaṅkaras is called vivara; and a hundred vivaras is called akṣobhya; a hundred akṣobhyas is called vivāha; a hundred vivāhas is called utsaṅga; a hundred utsaṅgas is called bahula; a hundred bahulas is

called nāgabala; a hundred nāgabalas is called tiṭila; a hundred tiṭilas is called vyavasthānaprajñapti; a hundred vyavasthānaprajñaptis is called hetuhila; and a hundred hetuhilas is called karahu; a hundred karahus is called hetvindriya; a hundred hetvindriyas is a samāptalambha; a hundred samāptalambhas is known as gaṇanāgati; a hundred gaṇanāgatis is called nīravaravadya; a hundred nīravaravadyas is called mudrābala; a hundred mudrābalas is called sarvabala; and a hundred sarvabalas is called visaṁjñāgatī; a hundred visaṁjñāgatīs is a sarvasaṁjñā; a hundred sarvasaṁjñās is a vibhūtaṅgama; and a hundred vibhūtaṅgamas is called tallakṣaṇa.

"Now with the numeration called tallakṣaṇa one could take even Meru, the king of mountains, as a subject of calculation and measure it. And next is the numeration called dvajāgravatī; with the help of this numeration, one could take all the sands of the river Ganges as a subject of calculation and measure them.

"Above this is the numeration called dvajāgraniśāmani; and above this is the numeration of vāhanaprajñapti; next comes the numeration called iṅgā; above this is the numeration of kuruṭā.

"Again above this is the numeration called sarvanikṣepā, with the help of which one could take the sands of ten Ganges rivers as a subject for calculation and measure them all. And again above this is the numeration called agrasārā, with the help of which one could take the sands of a hundred koṭis of Ganges rivers as a subject of calculation and measure them all. And again above this is the highest numeration called uttaraparamāṇurajaḥpraveśa, which is said to penetrate the most subtle atoms. Except for a

Tathāgata, or a Bodhisattva who has reached the purest essence of Enlightenment, or a Bodhisattva who has been initiated into all the Dharma, there is no being who knows this numeration, except myself or a Bodhisattva like me, who has arrived at his last existence, but has not yet left home."

Arjuna said: "Young man, how must one proceed in the numeration which penetrates the dust of the most subtle atoms?"

The Bodhisattva said: "Seven subtle atoms make a fine particle; seven fine particles make a small particle; seven small particles make a particle called vātāyanaraja; and seven particles of vātāyanaraja make a particle called śaśaraja; seven particles of śaśarāja make a particle called eḍakaraja; seven particles of eḍakaraja make a particle of goraja; seven particles of goraja make a likṣāraja; seven likṣāraja make a sarṣapa; seven sarṣapas make an adyava; seven adyavas make an aṅgulī; twelve aṅgulī make a parva; two parva make a hasta; four hastas make a dhanu; a thousand dhanu make a krośa of the country of Magadha; four krośas make a yojana. And now who among you knows the mass of one yojana, and how many of these subtle atoms it contains?"

Arjuna said: "I myself am even more astonished than others of lesser knowledge. Let the young prince show us the mass of a yojana, and explain how many subtle particles are found in it."

The Bodhisattva replied: "In the mass of a yojana there are a complete niyuta of akṣobhyas plus thirty hundred thousand of niyutas of koṭis plus sixty hundreds of koṭis plus

thirty-two koṭis and five times a hundred thousand and twelve thousand. Such is the calculation of subtle particles in the mass of a yojana. By this procedure, there are here in the land of Jambu seven thousand yojanas; in the land of Aparagodāna, eight thousand yojanas; in the land of Pūrvavideha, nine thousand yojanas; in the land of Uttarakuru, ten thousand yojanas.

"Continuing with this method, beginning with the worlds composed of four continents, there are a hundred koṭis of worlds with four continents and a hundred koṭis of great oceans; there are the hundred koṭis of Cakravālas and Mahācakravālas, the hundred koṭis of Sumerus, kings of mountains; the hundred koṭis of realms of the Four Great Kings; the hundred koṭis of realms of the Thirty-three gods; the hundred koṭis of realms of the Yāma gods; the hundred koṭis of Tuṣita realms; the hundred koṭis of Nirmāṇarata realms; and the hundred koṭis of Parinirmita vaśavartin realms. There are the hundred koṭis of Brahma realms; the hundred koṭis of Brahmapurohita realms; the hundred koṭis of Brahmapārṣadya realms; the hundred koṭis of Mahābrahmā realms; the hundred koṭis of Parīttābhā realms; the hundred koṭis of Apramāṇābhā realms; the hundred koṭis of Ābhāśvarana realms; the hundred koṭis of Parīttaśubha realms; the hundred koṭis of Apramāṇaśubha realms; the hundred koṭis of Śubhakṛtsṇa realms; the hundred koṭis of Anabhraka realms; the hundred koṭis of Puṇyaprasava realms; the hundred koṭis of Bṛhatphala realms; the hundred kotis of Asaṅgisattva realms; the hundred koṭis of Abṛha realms; the hundred koṭis of Atapa realms; the hundred koṭis of Sudṛṣa realms; the hundred koṭis of Sudarśana realms; and the hundred koṭis of the Akaniṣṭha realms.

"All together these are said to be the whole of the three thousand great thousands of worlds, spread out and developed. All the calculations of the essence of the yojana includes the many hundreds of yojanas of subtle particles in this mass of three thousand great thousands of worlds, the many thousands of yojanas, the many koṭis of yojanas, and the many niyutas of yojanas. And how many subtle particles are there? It passes beyond calculation, it is incalculable. There are an incalculable number of subtle atoms in the mass of the three thousand great thousands of worlds."

While this lesson on enumeration was being taught by the Bodhisattva, the great mathematician Arjuna and the multitude of Śākyas listened with pleasure, joy, and happiness. Everyone there was filled with great admiration, and each of them presented the Bodhisattva with garments and ornaments. The great mathematician Arjuna then uttered these two verses:

"The hundreds of koṭis and the ayutas,
the nayutas and the niyutas,
the procession of the kaṅkaras, the vivāhas,
and the akṣobhyas as well:
this supreme knowledge I do not have—he is above me.
One with such knowledge of numbers is incomparable!

"And doubtless, O Śākyas, he could calculate
the dust of the three thousand worlds,
as well as all the herbs, the woods, the medicinal plants,
and even the drops of water,

in the time it takes to say 'Hung'.
How could these five hundred Śākyas
do anything more wonderful?"

Then gods and men by the hundreds of thousands uttered cries of admiration and joy.

And the devaputras in the expanse of the sky recited this verse:

"The concepts and the ideas,
the reasonings good or bad, small or great,
the workings of the minds of all the beings
of the three times: all this he knows perfectly
through a single movement of his mind."

Thus, O monks, the Bodhisattva distinguished himself by his superiority over all the other young Śākyas. And as they continued their contests—in jumping, in swimming, in running and all the rest—the Bodhisattva again and again demonstrated his superiority. And the devaputras in the sky uttered these verses:

"By the qualities of devotion and austere practices,
by the power of love and self-denial,
by the strength of patience
developed during koṭis of kalpas,
he has made his mind and his body light.
Listen to how superior is his strength:

"You saw this great being enter the city;
and yet he travels to all the worlds in an instant
to offer gifts of jewels and gold
to innumerable Jinas in all the ten directions.

"You do not even notice his departure or his return,
so great is his supernatural power.
Who in this assembly could produce such miracles?
He is without equal.
It is through such actions
that the Bodhisattva shows his superiority,
so show yourselves respectful of him."

But the Śākyas said: "The people want the prince to show his superiority in feats of strength as well."

So the Bodhisattva stood alone on one side, as each of the five hundred young Śākyas prepared to test his strength. Then thirty-two young Śākyas made ready to contest with the Bodhisattva. First Nanda and Ānanda approached the Bodhisattva in order to wrestle with him. But no sooner did the Bodhisattva touch them with his hand than both, unable to endure his strength and his splendor, fell to the ground.

Then the arrogant young Śākya Devadatta risked himself against the Bodhisattva, for he was filled with vanity at being a Śākya and was proud of his strength. He postured and moved all around the arena to show off his strength to the Bodhisattva.

But without effort, without haste, the Bodhisattva gently picked up the young Devadatta with his right hand. Out of kindness, and with no thought of hurting him, and only to reduce Devadatta's pride, he tossed him three times head over heels in the air and then set him down unharmed on the ground.

Then the Bodhisattva said: "Enough, enough of this contest. It is not right. Join all together for the next." So all of the young men gathered together. Carried away by their pride, they attacked the Bodhisattva. But as soon as he touched them, they fell back; incapable of enduring the nobility, majesty, and strength of his body, they tumbled to the ground.

At that moment, gods and men by the hundreds of thousands uttered great cries of admiration, and the devaputras residing in the heavens rained down a profusion of flowers and recited in chorus:

"All the beings in the ten directions,
no matter how fearsome,
he would conquer in a moment;
at the touch of the most eminent of men,
they would fall flat upon the ground.

"Meru, Sumeru, the Cakravāla mountains,
and any other mountain in any direction,
would crumble to powder at the touch of his hands.
How wondrous—he has a human body,
but without limitations!

"And so when the terrible contestant, Māra, approaches,
together with his dark allies, his army,
and his horses, preceded by their standards,
then, by the power of love, he will overthrow the foe;
and sitting beneath the Bodhi tree,
he will attain the peace of supreme Enlightenment.
Through such actions will the Bodhisattva
show his true superiority."

Then Daṇḍapāṇi addressed these words to the young Śākyas: "You have seen what you wished to see. Show us now the art of archery."

Immediately, Ānanda set an iron drum as a target, at a distance of two krośas; Devadatta put an iron drum at four krośas; Sundarānanda placed an iron drum at a distance of six krośas; and the Śākya Daṇḍapāṇi arranged an iron drum at the distance of eight krośas. Then the Bodhisattva set an iron drum as a target at ten krośas, arranged seven tāla trees in back of it, and placed an iron figure of a boar at a still greater distance.

Ānanda's arrow reached the drum set at the distance of two krośas, but he could do no more.

Devadatta's arrow reached the drum set at four krośas, but no further would it go.

Sundarānanda reached the drum set at six krośas, but he could shoot no farther.

Daṇḍapāṇi reached the drum set at eight krośas and succeeded in piercing it, but could not shoot beyond it.

Now each bow given the Bodhisattva had broken as he drew it back, so he asked: "Does this city house a bow which will resist my strength and sustain my effort?"

The king replied: "My son, there is one." "Sire, where is it?" "Your grandfather Siṁhahanu, the Lion's Jaw, had a bow which is now honored in the temple of the gods, surrounded by incense and garlands. No one man up to the present time has been able to lift or bend this bow."

The Bodhisattva said: "Sire, let this bow be brought forth; we will try it." Immediately, the bow was brought. But none of the young Śākyas, although they made the greatest efforts, were able to lift it, much less bend it. Then the bow was presented to the Śākya Daṇḍapāṇi. Although he drew on all the strength of his body, he succeeded only in lifting the bow, but could not bend it.

Finally the bow was presented to the Bodhisattva, who seized it without getting up from his seat. Seated with his legs half-crossed, he grasped the bow with his left hand and bent it with a single finger of the right hand. The sound of the bow being bent traveled throughout the great city of Kapilavastu. Wondering at the noise, the inhabitants felt great fear until they learned that it came from young Sarvārthasiddha bending his grandfather's bow.

Hundreds of thousands of gods and men cheered in astonished admiration at the young prince's feat, and the devaputras residing in the sky addressed this verse to King Śuddhodana and to the great multitude:

"Just as this bow has been bent by the Muni
without effort and without rising from his seat,
so undoubtedly will the Muni conquer the army of Māra,
and soon fulfill his purposes."

O monks, the Bodhisattva, having bent the bow, took up an arrow and shot it. Such was his strength that it pierced the drums of Ānanda, Devadatta, Sundarānanda, and Daṇḍapāṇi, and then pierced the iron drum which he himself had set as a target, at the distance of ten krośas. On it flew, past the seven tāla trees and, finally, passing through the iron figure of the boar, the arrow penetrated the earth and disappeared. Where it entered the soil, a spring welled up which still today is called Śarakūpa, Spring of the Arrow.

As the arrow disappeared into the earth, hundreds of thousands of gods and men shouted praises, and the whole crowd of Śākyas marveled to each other: "He is in truth a wonder! Without any training, he has such skill in every worldly art!"

And the devaputras in the heavens spoke thus to King Śuddhodana and to the great multitude:

"Why are you so astonished?
The former Buddha Kṣitigarbha previously sat just so,

shooting the arrows of egolessness and emptiness
through the sky of tranquility
to vanquish the enemy, the fettering passions.
Having split asunder the web of wrong views,
he obtained Nirvāṇa, the pristine peace of Enlightenment.
Why then be astonished?"

And tossing a profusion of flowers on the Bodhisattva,
the devaputras departed.

In all the worldly arts, the Bodhisattva surpassed both gods and men, distinguishing himself as superior: in jumping, in the knowledge of writing, astrology, mathematics, and arithmetic; in wrestling, archery, running, swimming, and riding elephants mounted on the neck; in riding horseback, chariot driving, and the use of the bow; in firmness, strength, and courage, in feats of strength, in the use of the hook and the lasso, and in the action of throwing forward, backward, and taking away; in the tying of the wrists, the tying of the feet, the tying of locks of hair; in the actions of cutting, separating, penetrating, and grinding; in cutting apart, in hitting the right place, hitting exactly the right place; in striking with a sound; in striking heavy blows; in the game of dice; in poetry, grammar, and composition of books; in painting, sculpture, drama, and the science of tending the fire; in the art of playing on the vīnā; in instrumental music, dance, and song; in reading, reciting, and joking; in sports, dancing, decorating the body, and mime; in placing of garlands; in use of the fan, in drama, and creative arts; in business and dyeing garments; in magic, the explanation of dreams, and the signs of the birds; in

knowing the signs of women, the signs of men, the signs of elephants, horses, bulls, goats, sheep, and dogs; in the composition of vocabularies, holy scripture, the Purāṇas, the Itihāsas, the Veda, grammar, and the Nirukta; in the art of reciting poetry and the rites of offering; in astronomy, the systems of arithmetic, yoga, and religious ceremonies; in the method of the Vaiśeṣikas; in the knowledge of riches; in morality, the condition of the preceptor, the asura state, the language of birds and animals, and the knowledge of debate; in silk manufacturing; in dyes, working with wax, extracting oil, the cutting of palm leaves, and things.

And so the Śākya Daṇḍapāṇi gave his daughter Gopā to the Bodhisattva, and King Śuddhodana accepted her as the prince's betrothed.

At this time too, the Bodhisattva, in accordance with worldly custom, showed his skill in games and pleasures in the midst of eighty-four thousand women. And among the eighty-four thousand, Gopā of the Śākyas was solemnly recognized as the first wife.

However, Gopā of the Śākyas did not veil her face in the presence of her father-in-law or mother-in-law, or even in the presence of the men of the household. Many complained about her, saying: "This young woman has far too lax a manner! Always she goes about unveiled!" Hearing their complaints, Gopā recited these verses before the entire household:

"Whether seated, standing or walking,
the noble-minded shine unveiled.

The maṇi jewel appears more brilliant
when displayed at the top of the standard.

"The noble-minded shine
when leaving and when arriving;
standing or sitting, they shine.

"The noble-minded shine while speaking,
and also while remaining silent,
like the song and sight of the nightingale.

"Whether wearing a garment woven with gold,
or gaunt and thin and dressed in rags,
the noble-minded shine with their own splendor;
the one with virtues is adorned by his virtues.

"The noble-minded without misconduct
shine everywhere; the ignoble, however well-adorned,
do not shine anywhere.

"Those who speak sweet words with malice in their hearts
are like a pot of poison covered over with ambrosia,
like the bitter pith of wild fruit.
Drawing near such hardhearted people
is like caressing the head of a serpent.

"People flock with pleasure
to the presence of the noble-minded,
just as they frequent sacred ponds that bring healing;
the noble-minded are like a vase always filled with milk;
to look upon such pure beings is a true benediction.

"To look upon one who gives up dishonorable friends,
and takes to his heart the spiritual friends of the Dharma;
to gaze upon one who abandons misconduct,

and lives in accord with the law of the Buddha—
this is a blessing.

"Those who have mastered the body
and restrain it from ignoble acts;
those who have mastered their speech
and always speak with reserve;
those who have disciplined their senses
and are calm and at peace:
why should such people veil their faces?

"Even if they were to cover their bodies
with a thousand robes, the ignoble,
lacking shame, modesty, and truthful speech,
lacking these virtues entirely,
go through life more naked than the naked.

"Those who guard the mind and control the senses,
who are satisfied with their husbands,
and do not think of another,
without veil are brilliant like the sun and moon.
Why should such people veil their faces?"

And again:
"The magnanimous ṛṣis,
skilled in penetrating the thoughts of others,
know my intentions, just as
the assemblies of the gods know my conduct,
my virtues, my restraint, and my modesty.
Why should I veil my face?"

O monks, King Śuddhodana listened to these stanzas, which showed the wisdom of young Gopā of the Śākyas, and

he was filled with contentment, satisfaction, and pleasure. With great joy, he presented young Gopā with two pieces of white cloth sewn with precious stones, worth a hundred thousand koṭis of palas, and also gave her a pearl necklace and a golden garland inlaid with red pearls. Then he uttered this verse:

"My son is adorned with great virtues,
and his bride has qualities like his own;
the union of these two pure beings
is like the union of butter and ghee."

The Twelfth Chapter
Skill in the Worldly Arts



Plate 13



Plate 13

संचोदनापरिवर्तः

།བསྐུལ་བའི་ལེའུ།

Exhortation

O MONKS, the gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas, Śakra, Brahmā, and the Guardians of the World all found delight in making offerings to the Bodhisattva as he dwelt in the women's apartments. All came in great numbers, jubilant and crying out with joy.

Yet, O monks, soon it occurred to the gods, to the nāgas, yakṣas, and gandharvas, the asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas, to Śakra, Brahmā, and the Guardians of the World: "Too long, in truth, is this pure being staying in the women's apartments! Over a great period of time he has brought many beings to perfect maturation by the four means of conversion: giving, kind words, helpfulness, and consistency between words and deeds; after obtaining Enlightenment, those beings will understand and teach the Dharma. But soon those vessels of the Dharma will be no more. Too late will the Bodhisattva withdraw from the world, and too late will he attain perfect and complete Enlightenment."

Full of respect and regard, with palms joined, the devaputras bowed before the Bodhisattva, and gazing upon him,

they expressed their desire: "When will we see this being, pure and noble, the greatest of all, withdraw from the world? When will we see him, seated at the foot of the great king of trees, overcome the demon and his army, and attain the perfect and complete Enlightenment of a Buddha? When will we see the Bodhisattva attain the ten powers of a Tathāgata, the four fearlessnesses of a Tathāgata, and the eighteen pure Buddhadharmas? When will he delight the world of gods, men, and asuras by acting out the great play of a Buddha, by turning the Wheel of the Dharma, the best of wheels, showing its twelve aspects as it turns three times?"

O monks, for countless kalpas, for a continual and great span of time, the Bodhisattva had had no need to depend on others for either mundane or supramundane knowledge. In matters concerning virtuous action, he was his own spiritual preceptor. Endowed with the five superior knowledges, omniscient in every thought, he had known time for ages, had known the measure of time, known the favorable moment. Playing with the foundations of supernatural power, skilled in knowing the faculties and minds of beings, knowing whether the time was favorable or not, he gave time due consideration, and like the great ocean, was timely in all things.

As the Bodhisattva was endowed with the strength of superior knowledge, his grasp of time was all-embracing—he knew the time for discipline, the time for union, the time for giving aid, the time for equanimity, the time for speech, the time for silence, the time to withdraw from the world, the time to wander as a monk, the time to speak out. He knew the time for focusing the mind in the proper way, the time for solitude, the time for attending the circle of royalty,

the time for attending the brāhmins and householders, and for attending the assemblies of gods, nāgas, yakṣas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas; the time for attending the assemblies of Śakra, Brahmā, the Guardians of the World, and the assemblies of monks, nuns, and male and female disciples; he knew the time to teach the Dharma and the time to be absorbed in contemplation. He knew all this: everywhere and at all times, the Bodhisattva knew time, saw the time.

O monks, the Bodhisattva had obtained the Dharma of the Bodhisattvas who are in their last existence. Now it is necessary that the Lord Buddhas of the ten directions exhort the Bodhisattva while he is residing in the women's apartments, encouraging him with melodious voices and instruments and with all the other similar doors of the Dharma.

Concerning this it is said:

By the power of the Buddhas
who dwell in the ten directions,
these verses are heard
from the lovely sound of instruments—
songs full of sweetness
exhorting the best among the best of men:

"In times past, seeing beings
burdened by misery so great, enduring hundreds of evils,
you vowed to be Protector and Refuge of the World,
to be the Best of Guides, who gives aid to all!

"Excellent Hero!
Remember your former conduct and aspirations.
O Help of the World!
Now is the time, the hour, the moment:
go forth from the house, you of the ṛṣis,
Best among the Best!

"Greatest of the World, your qualities are boundless.
In times past you gave away all of your riches—
you gave up your hands, your feet, even your head.
And now you will be a Buddha, training gods and men.

"Due to your good conduct,
you have practiced austerities.
Due to your patience,
you have come as a help to the world.
Due to your valor,
you have acquired hundreds of good qualities.
In meditation, in wisdom, no one is your equal
in all the three worlds.

"The many possessed by anger and malice,
wrap them in your love, O Sugata!
For the ignorant, traveling a false path,
deprived of the qualities of virtue,
your compassion takes many forms.

"You are filled with merit, knowledge, and virtue,
with the superior knowledge of contemplation
free from defilements.
You shine in the ten directions
like the spotless moon come out from behind the clouds."

From the sweet sounds of many instruments
such songs of the Jinas issue forth,

exhorting the one venerated by gods and men:
"Depart from home! Your time has come!"

O monks, the Bodhisattva lives in the most excellent of dwellings, decorated with wondrous things and arranged for every conceivable comfort. Like the dwellings of the long-lived gods, the palace is remarkable for its terraces and porticos, for its arcades, round windows, and observation towers. All sorts of precious ornaments have been arranged with careful art, as well as parasols, standards, and unfurled banners. Jeweled bells hang from all the many trellises, and hundreds of thousands of silk fringes, garlands of flowers, and garlands set with pearls and other precious stones are draped everywhere. Carved wooden bridges covered with flowers add to its charm.

The air is impregnated with the perfume from cassolettes; the grounds, sheltered by silk tents, are sown with brilliant, soft-scented flowers of all seasons. Many are the places for enjoyment: glades where ponds are filled with clusters of white lotuses; places resounding with the songs and cries of birds—patraguptas, parrots, jays, cuckoos, geese, peacocks, mallards, kunālas, sparrows, partridges, and many others; places where the soil of the earth is made of lapis lazuli, reflecting images of all kinds, delighting the eye, which can never gaze its fill; places where the greatest contentment and joy arise.

The Bodhisattva resides in this finest of abodes, this finest of shelters. Here he spends his days, the Spotless One, the Stainless One, decked with garlands and necklaces. His

perfect body is oiled with the most precious and beautifully scented unguents. Clothed in spotless and perfectly pure white garments, he reclines on couches covered with soft cottons and beautifully decorated materials, soft to the touch as a garment of kācalindi cloth. The Bodhisattva is attended by women resembling goddesses, free from all moral blemish and adorned by the finest noble deeds.

Within the splendid inner apartments, conches, drums, timbals, and brass drums, harps, lutes, tambourines, cymbals, and flutes give forth all kinds of pleasant sounds and melodies; the hosts of women, with soft and responsive voices that touch the heart, serenade the Bodhisattva with concerts and entrancing melodies. But now, by the blessings of the Lord Buddhas who dwell in the ten directions, these verses of exhortation emerge in the midst of the music.

The maidens, their spirits joyous, their minds content,
play the sweetest, most ravishing music with their flutes;
but through the power
of the supreme Jinas of the ten directions,
these verses are heard instead:

"O Hero, in times past,
you saw beings still lacking protection,
and vowed to deliver them from birth and old age,
from death and from all other sorrows,
by becoming a Buddha of great dignity,
free from desire and suffering.

"O Excellent One,
you will quickly leave the best of cities;

you will travel to a place frequented by the ṛṣis of old;
you will become a Buddha
endowed with the unequaled knowledge of the Jinas.

"In times past you gave away all your varied riches;
you gave even your precious hands and feet.
Behold, Great Ṛṣi, your time has come!
Pour forth to the world the limitless waters
from the river of the Dharma!

"Your fine conduct has been spotless and unequaled;
the supremely good has always adorned you.
No one can surpass you in good conduct, O Great Ṛṣi!
Deliver the world from all its corruptions!

"Strong in patience and self-control,
you endured for hundreds of lives
the many hard words that are heard in the world.
O Lord of Men, rise up and depart from home.

"Constant and unshakable, O Sugata, is your valor,
great from beginning to end.
After conquering the crafty demon and his army,
you will completely destroy the three lower states of being.

"For this have you practiced good works and austerities,
to burn away the emotions of these sad times.
Pour forth the water of immortality
to satisfy the thirst of the unprotected.

"Go quickly from this excellent city,
remembering your great vow of former times:
that when you obtained the dignity
of an immortal Buddha, free from suffering,

you would quench the thirst of sentient beings
with the nectar of immortality.

"Skilled in practicing the best wisdom,
your knowledge extensive, unlimited, and stainless,
make the pure and clear light of wisdom shine
for the senseless ones traveling the path of doubt.

"For hundreds of lives you have practiced great love,
taking pleasure in compassion and detachment.
Share with the world this excellent conduct,
which has been your practice."

By the glory of the Jinas of the ten directions,
these verses exhort the young prince, reclining on his couch,
delighting in the melodious instruments;
they remind him of the great bouquet of virtue,
the gathered blossoms of his past good qualities.

While charming maidens delight him
with enchanting music,
the Jinas residing in the ten directions,
who train both gods and men,
cause this excellent discourse
to manifest through the music:

"You have produced the innate qualities of the Jinas,
and so endowed have come to aid sentient beings.
Remember! Remember your former religious practices
and discipline; go quickly to the best of trees
and reach immortal dignity.

"You who possess Enlightenment, the greatest strength,
offer the taste of immortality to the gods
and to thirsty men who lack the Jina's qualities.
Endowed with the ten strengths, honored by the wise,

quickly, O Lord of Men,
distribute the nectar of immortality.

"In former existences you have given up your goods,
your jewels, your gold, your bride, and your beloved son,
cities, villages, your very head.
You have given up your hands, your feet,
and your eyes as well,
you who aid all sentient beings,
you who find joy in the Jina's qualities.

"In times past, O Best of Men,
when you were a virtuous king,
a man came before you and asked for your land
with all its cities and villages.
You gave them, and your mind remained untroubled.

"In times past, O Best of Brāhmins,
you were the virtuous brāhmin for a king,
honoring the spiritual preceptors and not harming others.
You established a great many people in virtue
and then were reborn in the abode of the gods.

"In times past, when you were a king's son
and the best of ṛṣis,
an evil king cut off your limbs in anger.
You fulfilled the time of death,
and your mind was not troubled.
Milk flowed then from your hands and feet.

"In times past, when you were the ṛṣi Śyāma,
taking pleasure in spiritual preceptors,
living simply, high on a mountain,
you were struck by a king with a poisoned arrow.
Your heart was not troubled, and you pardoned the king.

"In times past, when you were the virtuous king of gazelles,
a man was caught in a raging mountain stream.
Full of goodness, you pulled him onto dry land,
and your mind was not troubled by helping your foe.

"In times past, O Best of Men,
when you were a brāhmin's son,
your precious maṇi stone fell into the great ocean.
With your powerful strength, O Leader of Men,
you parted the great ocean to retrieve this gem.

"In times past, O Excellent One,
when you were the best of ṛṣis,
a brāhmin came to you seeking refuge,
and asked that you drive off his foe.
You sacrificed your own body,
while the brāhmin kept his.

"In times past, you approached
the ṛṣi Śyāma who dwelt in a tree,
and he asked you to count all its leaves.
Calmly you counted each separate leaf;
calmly you told him the accurate number.

"In times past, when you were a virtuous parrot
living in a tree, you did not abandon the tree as it died,
honoring the memory of its former benefit.
Rejoicing, in memory of your virtues,
the lord of gods made of the tree an object of veneration.

"Your pious works and practice of austerities
are unequaled, O possessor of so many virtues.
Conforming your actions to the qualities you possess,
give up the earth and its cities!
Behold, your time has come. Quickly establish the world
in the practice of the Jina's qualities!"

While the pearls among women, adorned with finery,
play harmonies on the instruments,
through the power of the Jinas of the ten directions
verses full of glory are heard amidst the music:

"O Lamp of the World, many kalpas ago
you vowed to be the refuge for the world
devoured by old age and death.
O Lion of Men, remember this vow of former times.
Behold, Lord of Men, it is time to leave your family!

"In your millions of lives here below,
you have given myriad gifts:
goods, gold, and precious stones,
beautiful garments and various costly things,
your hands and your feet, your eyes,
your beloved son, your prosperous kingdom—everything!
In giving, you felt neither anger nor hatred
toward any of those who were asking.

"You have been the calm king,
merciful and compassionate,
O Śaśiketu of the beautiful teeth.
With the maṇi jewel gracing the top of your head,
you shine like the moon!
O Dauntless Hero, king with beautiful eyes,
for many niyutas of years you have offered gifts gladly.
Such are your principal actions.
Such are the manifestations of your giving.

"For many kalpas, O Sugata, your conduct
has been dedicated to moral practices.
Your pure morality has been as perfect
and spotless as the precious maṇi stone.
As the female yak keeps her tail by guarding it,

your actions have preserved your morality.
Delighting in moral practices,
you have rendered great service to the world here below.

"As the finest of elephants, you were struck by a hunter,
and seized with pity for that cruel being,
in your goodness you helped him.
You gave up your beautiful tusks,
but not your morality.
These virtuous acts and many others you performed:
Such are the manifestations of your moral practice.

"On behalf of the world you have joyfully endured
thousands of refusals when you sought for help.
You withstood murder, persecution,
hurtful words, imprisonments,
all the while delighting in patience.
Men whom you formerly honored and made happy
became your murderers—and those you pardoned:
Such is your patience.

"When you lived as a bear in the mountains,
O Lord Protector,
you found a man frightened by an avalanche.
You gave him fruits and roots to ensure his comfort.
And when he returned, leading men to kill you,
with patient acceptance you pardoned him.

"Firm, durable, solid, and dauntless
has your valor ever remained.
Firm also your knowledge, virtues, and asceticism,
as you searched for Enlightenment.
Overcome by the strength of your valor,
the demon has lost his power.

O Lion of Men, the moment has come
for you to leave your home!

"In times past, when you were the finest of horses,
beautiful and golden,
you were seized with compassion
and traveled rapidly across the sky
into the land of the rākṣasas.
Rescuing the desperate men trapped by the demons,
you established them in happiness.
Quickly you disciplined their wild minds
and brought joy to the barbarian lands.
Such are your principal actions,
the numerous manifestations of valor.

"By restraint, calm, and discipline,
O Great Meditator,
you have destroyed the fettering passions.
Taking satisfaction in contemplation,
you accomplished the aims of beings
by means of your virtuous qualities.
O Best of Beings,
thus does your samādhi manifest!

"In times past, when you were a ṛṣi,
established in the bliss of contemplation,
men without a king came for you
to give you royal consecration.
You have established many sentient beings
in the ten virtues and in brahmacarya.
Those among them who have passed from the human realm
have entered the abode of Brahmā.

"Skillfully knowing beings in all the different realms,
you excel in the knowledge of the conduct of others,

in the language of sentient beings,
in the knowledge of the senses, in discipline and duty,
and in knowing the cause of the workings of the mind.
It is time for you, king's son, to leave your family.

"When you saw sentient beings adopting harmful views,
beings surrounded by old age, death, and misery,
you led them to understanding
by teaching the right way of examining existence.
O Destroyer of Darkness,
you have accomplished great things in the world."

Thus through the power of the Jinas' majesty,
many beautiful verses filled with brilliant qualities
make themselves heard to encourage the hero:

"Seeing sentient beings full of suffering,
do not remain indifferent.
Possessor of the highest intelligence,
it is time to leave your family."

The women here are joyful,
adorned with brilliant garments,
with pearl necklaces and perfumed garlands.
Their thoughts are affectionate and tender.
But by the power of the Jinas,
verses emerge from the music
urging the Best of Beings to depart:

"During numerous kalpas, you have aided all beings,
giving up what was difficult to relinquish.
You have practiced morality, patience, and effort;
you have practiced contemplation
and transcendent wisdom.
Now the time has come.

Quickly resolve to leave your family—
do not delay, O Guide!

"In times past, you gave up precious treasures:
gold, silver, and ornaments.
To many different beings
you made offerings of all kinds;
you gave up your wife, your son, and your daughter,
your body, your kingdom, and your life,
things immeasurably difficult to part with,
for the sake of supreme Enlightenment.

"As a king, you have been renowned
for the splendor of your good works.
You have been Nimindhara, Nimi, Kṛṣṇabandhu,
as well as Brahmadaṭṭa, Keśari, Sahasrajña,
Dharmacinti, Arcimat, and Dṛṭhajana.
Considering carefully the purpose of life,
you have given afflicted beings
the things hard to relinquish.

"When you were Sutasoma,
Dīptavīrya, and Puṇyaraśmi, you gave abundantly.
Remember your great strength;
remember what you have relinquished.

"O Ṛṣi of kings, with a body like Candra's,
O Hero who makes the truth grow,
Orator of great eloquence,
ceaselessly devoted to goodness,
you have also been Sumati and Surata.

"You have been Candraprabha and Viśeṣagāmin;
you have been Reṇu, master of the ten directions,
Śāntaga, hero of giving,

and King Kāśi, with his diadem of pearls,
teaching peace. As these kings and others,
you have given up much that is difficult to relinquish.
Just as you poured forth a rain of gifts,
so may you now shower the world with the Dharma.

"Seeing that sentient beings are equal in number
to the sands of the Ganges,
you have made countless offerings
to achieve their deliverance;
you made unimaginable offerings to the Buddhas,
while searching for supreme Enlightenment.
The time has come, O Hero, to leave the finest of cities!

"First you offered śāla flowers to Amoghadarśin;
For an instant you gazed upon Vairocana with pure mind.
Balsam you gave to Dundubhisvara;
after seeing Candana, you carried a torch
made of grass into his house.

"Seeing Reṇu enter the city,
you tossed a handful of gold dust.
On seeing Samantadarśin, you proclaimed your devotion.
To the teacher Dharmeśvara
you spoke your approval: 'Well done!'
You joyously threw a golden garland to Mahārṣiskandhin.

"You gave fringes to Dharmadhvaja,
and to Nirodha a handful of beans;
aśoka flowers to Jñānaketu; to Sārathi a drink;
you gave a lamp to Ratnaśikhin;
medicinal herbs to Padmadāni;
a pearl necklace to Sarvābhibhū;
to Sāgara you gave yellow lotuses.

"You gave tapestries to Padmagarbha;
to Simba rain tents;
clarified butter to Śālendrarāja;
milk to Puṣpita; to Yaśodatta kuruṇḍa flowers;
to Satyadarśin prepared food.
You bowed down before Jñānameru;
to Nāgadatta you gave a monk's garment.

"You gave to Abhyuccagāmi the best sandalwood;
to Tīkṣaṇa a handful of salt;
you gave yellow lotuses to Mahāvyūha;
precious stones to Raśmirāja;
a handful of gold to Śākyamuni; praises to Indraketu;
to Sūryānanda earrings; to Sumati a golden diadem.

"To Nāgābhibhū you presented a precious stone;
you gave Bhaiṣajyarāja a precious parasol;
to Siṁhaketu a throne,
to Guṇāgradhāri a jeweled net.
All sorts of sweet music you gave Kāśyapa;
to Arciketu you always offered flowers
with the most delicate scents.

"You gave Akṣobhyarāja a storied house;
a garland to Lokapujita;
to Tagarasikhin you offered your kingdom.
You gave all sorts of perfumes to Durjaya.
You gave yourself to Mahāpradīpa;
you gave necklaces to Padmottara;
various flowers to Dharmaketu;
to Dīpaṁkara blue lotuses.

"With all these things and many others
you have honored in times past the Best of Beings;

and more besides you have offered to many.
Remember the past Buddhas
and the Masters you have honored!
Do not neglect the beings suffering without a protector!
Leave the fine city!

"When you saw Dīpaṁkara, you attained greatest patience,
and also the five superior and imperishable knowledges.
With great pleasure, you honored numerous Buddhas,
more than thought can embrace,
throughout innumerable kalpas, in all parts of the world.

"Innumerable kalpas have passed,
and these Buddhas have passed into Nirvāṇa.
All the bodies and names which were yours,
where have they gone?
Every substance ends by perishing;
there is nothing permanent in what is composite.
Fleeting are desire, royalty, and pleasures.
Leave your fine city!

"Old age and suffering, disease and death,
terrible they come, accompanied by terror,
like the fearsome fire that bursts out at the end of a kalpa.
Every substance ends by perishing;
there is nothing permanent in what is composite.
See the beings who have fallen into great misery.
Leave your home, Possessor of the Virtues."

While the group of maidens
make music with lutes and flutes
to entertain the Lord of Men,
stretched out at ease on his couch,
these words are heard emerging from the music:

"All the three worlds are consumed
by the suffering of old age and disease;
this world without a protector
is consumed by the fire of death;
ever crazed, beings do not try for liberation
but circle in agitation like bees caught in a vase.

"Unstable like autumn clouds
are all the three worldly states;
like scenes from a drama
are the birth and death of beings;
like a mountain torrent or a lightning flash,
the brief and rapid life of creatures passes.

"From the earth and from the abode of the gods,
through the power of desire and ignorance,
beings are reborn in the three lower realms.
The ignorant travel round the five states of being,
turning like the potter's wheel.

"Beautiful forms, melodious sounds,
agreeable odors and tastes, and pleasant sensations
envelop this world in the net of time,
like a monkey caught in the nets of a hunter.

"Accompanied by fears and struggles,
always producing enmity,
the qualities of desire lead to pain and suffering,
like the edge of a sword, like poison ivy.
The noble-minded throw them out
like a vessel full of vomit.

"The root of suffering is desire;
and the desire for life grows like vines,
always accompanied by fears and struggles,

ever producing the fog of forgetfulness,
ever producing the shadows of the mind,
ever producing the causes of fear.

"The noble-minded consider desire
a fearsomely blazing fire-pit,
a great swamp, a sword blade,
the edge of a razor smeared with honey.

"Like the head of a serpent, like a vessel of vomit,
so are desires seen by the sages.
They are known as enemies
as dangerous as are sharp stakes,
a bird's carcass, or an apricot pit for a playful dog.

"The qualities of desire resemble
the image of the moon in the water, a reflection,
or an echo in the mountains;
the noble-minded consider them to be like apparitions,
like the presentations of a play, like a dream.

"The qualities of desire endure only a moment;
they are like an illusion, a mirage,
like a bubble of water or foam;
the wise know they are produced
by errors of the imagination.

"When one is young and beautiful
and behaves like a fool,
one is loved, desired, and sought after;
when old age and disease have destroyed
the splendor of the body,
one is abandoned as gazelles abandon a dried-up river.

"When one is rich and powerful
and behaves like a fool,

one is loved, desired, and sought after;
when one's fortune is lost, and one falls into despair,
one is abandoned as men abandon a barren desert.

"Like the tree which bears flowers and fruit,
the one who delights in giving brings joy;
when he has no more fortune, and in old age must beg,
he is deemed as disagreeable as a vulture.

"One loves to meet the handsome,
the powerful, and the rich, those who charm the senses;
but when they are overcome by old age and disease,
and their possessions are lost, such fine ones
seem as disagreeable as the lord of death.

"Overcome by old age, youth having passed,
one is like a tree struck by lightning,
and is feared like an abandoned house with rotten floors.
How can one escape old age? Tell us quickly, O Muni!

"Old age lays waste the multitude of men and women,
as the mālu ivy chokes a thick forest of śālas.
Old age drains away courage, energy, and strength,
as if a man were plunged into a swamp.

"Old age changes beauty into ugliness;
it takes away the bloom.
Old age robs one of well-being, love, and respect,
and leads to death.
Old age takes away luster, power, and strength.

"Beings are destroyed by hundreds of illnesses and pains,
just as gazelles are consumed by fire.
After seeing the world in the sway of old age and sickness,
how does one escape? Teach us quickly!

“As the cold winter wind ravishes the fields and forests,
so old age with its illnesses ravishes the bloom of youth,
destroying strength and beauty,
dimming the faculties and weakening the body.

“Old age consumes great stores of money and grains;
old age and illness always produce suffering.
They wound and make hateful whatever is pleasant;
they burn like the midday sun in the sky.

“Like the onward flowing current of a river,
old age and illness bring the time of death,
rebirth, and change of existence;
like a leaf or fruit fallen from a tree,
one is separated from possessions and loved ones,
with no chance of return, no reunion.

“Death renders the powerful powerless;
it carries one off in the same way
that a river uproots and carries away a pine tree.
Alone, without companions,
a man must go to death by himself,
followed by the fruit of his own deeds and powerless.

“Death seizes beings by the hundreds;
as a sea monster devours myriad creatures;
as a garuḍa seizes a snake, and the lion a bull;
as a raging fire destroys grasses, plants, and animals.

“Remember the vow you made to deliver the world
from its hundreds of evil afflictions.
Remember your promise to liberate beings.
Now is the time to leave home!”

While the joyous women
entertain the great Muni with music,

through the power of the Sugatas,
these various verses come forth from the music:

"Everything composite passes quickly,
enduring briefly, like lightning in the sky.
Lo, your time has come.
Now is the moment to leave home, O Suvrata!

"Whatever is composite is neither permanent nor stable,
but is fragile like an earthen vase;
like goods borrowed from another or a city of sand,
it does not long endure.

"Composite factors are perishable,
like a coat of mud plaster in the rainy season;
weak and dependent on conditions,
ephemeral by nature, these factors shift and alter
like a river's sandy shore.

"Composite factors are like the flame of a lamp;
they quickly shift and change;
like the wind, they die away;
like a spray of sea foam,
they are evanescent and insubstantial.

"Composite factors do not interact; they are empty.
Examined, they are hollow,
like the stem of the kadalī plant.
They delude and trouble the mind like a mirage;
they are like the empty hand which deceives a child.

"All composites exist
proceeding from causes and conditions;
causes make conditions, and conditions, causes:
they support each other.
The ignorant do not understand this.

"Just so, valvaja grass must blend with muñja grass
to make a rope with strength,
and the rope is needed to turn the waterwheel;
singly they can do nothing.

"Every constituent part of existence
is established by one thing depending on another.
Each becomes established by another:
where one begins and ends, and how long it lasts,
can nowhere be seen.

"When there is a seed, there is a sprout,
but the seed is not the sprout.
It is not something else,
though it is not the same thing either.
And so there is no permanence or ending.

"Composite factors are derived from ignorance;
even the factors do not exist in reality.
Composites and ignorance are both empty by nature;
they are motionless, non-interacting.

"By means of the seal the impression appears:
did the seal shift to the impression,
or did it not? It is not the same,
yet is not from something else.
Thus are all composites impermanent,
and yet they are not destroyed.

"The eye being fixed on form,
eye-consciousness is produced,
even though the eye does not depend on the form,
and the form does not move to the eye.

"Though the characteristic of form is egoless and ugly,
it can appear as ego and attractive.

But it is only an appearance—
wrong, not genuine.
In this way does the eye-consciousness arise.

"That ceasing, another consciousness comes forth.
Thus do the wise see production and cessation:
nothing goes anywhere,
and nothing comes from any place;
therefore yogis see all as being like illusion,
like emptiness.

"Even so does fire come forth from two sticks of wood:
the wood rubbed, and the wood with which one rubs,
and the effort of the hands—
through these three together.
But fire, once produced, is very quickly checked.

"In this way do the wise examine everything:
where does it come from, where does it go?
Examining all the points of space,
they find neither its arrival nor its departure.

"Like that are all sense objects and sense qualities
and all realms of being;
they have as their cause desire, ignorance, and karma.
Taken together, all of these things
are called sentient beings,
but their ultimate reality does not exist.

"The tongue, the throat, the lips, and the palate,
produce together the sounds of the letters.
Without the throat or palate,
no sound of letters is produced;
only through their interaction does sound come forth.

"Our perceptions are the same.
But mind and speech have no visible form;
they are nowhere perceived
internally or externally.

"The observant man examines
the production and cessation of sound,
the voice and its modulation,
and sees that speech endures only an instant;
it is like an echo.

"The sound of the vīnā lute arises
depending on three things together:
the strings, the wood, and the movement of the hand;
and so with other musical instruments.

"Let the observant examine:
where has it come from, where has it gone?
Searching all the points of space,
one finds neither the arrival nor the departure of sound!

"Like that also are all causes and conditions
from which come forth the composite factors,
and the yogi, seeing reality,
sees all composite factors
to be empty and non-interacting.

"Empty the skandhas, the āyatanas, the dhātus;
empty on the inside, empty on the outside;
each has no self-identity and no foundation.
All things have as their characteristic
the nature of the sky.

"This characteristic of dharmas, just as they are,
you understood when you saw

the beautiful light of the Buddha Dīpaṁkara.
Now let it be understood by gods and men.

"Beings are made miserable by desire and hatred,
which do not truly exist.
From the cloud of mercy, O Guide,
cause the clear and calming rain of ambrosia to fall.

"You have said that when you had found
full and true Enlightenment,
you would draw beings together by means of true riches.
For this, O Sage, have you made sacrifices
again and again, for tens of millions of kalpas.

"Remembering your past conduct regarding your wealth,
do not neglect the suffering ones, the poor, the afflicted;
draw them together by offering true riches,
O Charioteer of Beings.

"Guarding your moral conduct, you have said
you would close the gates to the lower realms
for tens of millions of beings,
and show them the supreme gate of immortality
in the higher states.
By means of your moral conduct, achieve your great aim.

"Remembering your former conduct,
close the gate to the three lower states
and open the gate of immortality
in the higher states of being.

"Meditating always on patience, you have said
that after you helped beings cross the ocean of existence,
and helped destroy the anger and fury
of all those attached to life,

you would establish them in well-being and calm,
free from all fever.

"Remember your conduct in former times!
Do not neglect those who perform bad actions,
those troubled by rancor,
or by the desire to harm and injure.
Establish them all in the land of patience.

"Remember your aim in cultivating effort.
Prepare the vessel of the Dharma;
help all beings cross the ocean of existence;
establish them in well-being and calm, free from fever.

"Remember your conduct in former times.
With the strength of your persistence
and the power of effort,
quickly rescue those unprotected
from the four currents which carry them away.

"Remember your conduct in former times:
you meditated on destroying the fettering passions
for the sake of those whose minds grow troubled and dim.
You have said: 'I will establish them in the right path,
those whose thoughts are like monkeys.'

"The net of emotionality fills this world with confusion—
do not neglect the beings tormented by emotions;
but remember your former conduct,
and establish all beings in one-pointed meditation.

"In times past, immersed in the meditation of wisdom,
you said you would give the vision which sees the truth,
which makes visible the hundreds of teachings,
to all beings enveloped in the shadow
of ignorance and darkness.

"Remember your former conduct:
to beings enveloped in the shadows
of ignorance and confusion,
give of the beautiful ray of holy wisdom,
the spotless eye of the Dharma,
free from the fettering passions."

Verse after verse poured forth
from the instruments and music played by the maidens.
Hearing them, the Bodhisattva abandoned all pride
and applied himself
to the highest, most excellent Enlightenment.

O monks, even while in the women's apartments, the Bodhisattva was not deprived of hearing the Dharma, was not deprived of meditating on the Dharma. And why? Because, O monks, the Bodhisattva had long been respectful of the Dharma and the teachers of the Dharma. He had long been intent on the Dharma with great diligence; for he desired the Dharma and gained great pleasure in it; he was never sated by his study of Dharma. He taught the Dharma as he heard it; peerless master of the great gifts of the Dharma, he taught the Dharma without confusion. Never greedy for benefits, he willingly lent Dharma texts. He mastered the Dharma and all connected with it. Heroic in his reliance on the Dharma, he made the Dharma his abode, his protection, his refuge. Through adhering to the Dharma, through patience and certainty in the Dharma, he obtained deliverance. Practicing transcendent wisdom, he attained realization through skillful means.

O monks, by making use of great skillful means, and surrounded with the respect of all, the Bodhisattva demonstrated the higher path of action through his playful activity in the women's apartments. His actions demonstrated clearly the honorable path of the Bodhisattvas of the past, who had gone completely beyond worldly needs while following teachings which conform to the customs of the world. Having recognized for a long time the error of desire, the Bodhisattva demonstrated his enjoyment with the intention of maturing other beings.

By the power of merit accumulated through immeasurable virtue, he demonstrated complete dominion over the world. He demonstrated the most agreeable satisfaction, beyond any pleasure produced by sight or sound, by odor, taste, or touch, whether in the world of gods or men. He demonstrated the power of the mind to free itself from the hold of all the senses, which take their pleasure in desire. By the strength of a former prayer and vow, the Bodhisattva became the companion of beings; by means of dwelling together with them, he completely matured beings brought together by the root of virtue. With a mind unsullied by the stains of emotionality, while he was in the women's apartments, he watched for the proper moment to bring to maturity those whom he had gathered around him.

Now the Bodhisattva remembered most completely his prayer of former times, and he made manifest the Dharma of the Buddha. He made manifest the force of prayer and showed the greatest compassion for all beings, considering their complete deliverance.

All prosperity changes and ends, trouble is everywhere: that is what the Bodhisattva saw in each thing. He per-

ceived the numerous miseries and the many fears in the world of rebirth. Breaking the chains of the demon, he freed himself from the stream of rebirth; he applied himself entirely to the thought of Nirvāṇa.

O monks, from times past to the present, the Bodhisattva has recognized clearly the sorrows of existence. Having reflected deeply on the composite factors, he has no taste for what is composite, no taste for grasping and pleasures. Intent on the Buddhadharma, he turns directly toward Nirvāṇa and turns his back on rebirth. He is delighted to act in the way of a Tathāgata and not to be involved with Māra's realm.

He sees the burning defects of existence; he desires to leave the totality of the three worldly spheres and skillfully frees himself from the evil of rebirth. Desiring the state of a wandering monk, he plans to leave his family. Absorbed in truth, seeking solitude, inclined toward solitude, and tending toward solitude, he turns toward the edge of the forest: he desires the calm of complete solitude.

He applies himself to what is useful to himself and others. He is a hero without equal in effort. He desires the good of the world; he wants to be useful; he seeks happiness and benefit for all the world. He desires to be useful; he dwells in compassion; he is the one with great mercy. Skilled in gathering students, he is always free from agitation; he is skilled in training beings, in bringing them to complete maturity.

He has completely given up attraction to outward things, but has affectionate thoughts for each being, as for an only son. Happy to share his gifts, he gives abundantly; he gives open-handedly; he is a hero of giving. He has made many

holy offerings and has abundant merit; he upholds the objects of merit. He is free from defilements and from envy; his mind is free from grasping. He is the peerless master of giving. Having given, he desires nothing in return; he is a hero of generosity.

He is the opponent of desire and passion, of covetousness, hatred, folly, and pride, of haughtiness, ignorance, envy, and the rest, for he opposes the enemy, the host of fettering passions. He does not waver from omniscience. Well-armed with great renunciation, he is full of compassion for the world, desiring to be useful. Staunchly armed and devoted to the deliverance of all beings, he has the courage that comes with great compassion; he has far-reaching courage. He is irreversible. With an impartial mind for all beings, he wears the armor of renunciation.

He satisfies all beings according to their desires. He is the great vessel of Enlightenment, ceaselessly realizing the Dharma; his prayers to obtain Enlightenment bear fruit. He does not lower his banner. He has generously made the gift which purifies the three worlds completely. He is solidly armed with the vajra-bolt of the highest wisdom; he stops short the adversary, the fettering passions.

He is endowed with morality and with all good qualities and actions. His body, speech, and mind are well-guarded: seeing the danger of even the slightest transgression, he has perfectly pure conduct and a spotless mind free from all blemish.

His mind is never agitated: not by bad words, harmful discourse, or blame; by raillery, disdain, or censure; by blows, threats, or murder; not by the chains and shackles of the emotions. His mind is never agitated; he is well-

endowed with patience. His mind is never harmful, and he never does harm; his mind lacks any thought of harm.

To be useful to all beings, he has the initiative of burning valor. He is firm in the observances; he never turns away from achieving all the forms of virtue. He has mindfulness and complete knowledge. He abides in equanimity; he is never distracted; he meditates one-pointedly. He is skilled in the analysis of the Dharma; he has obtained clarity; he is free from confusion and from darkness. He has recognized clearly what is impermanent, what is suffering, what is egoless, what is disagreeable. He duly practices all the Teachings, in accord with mindfulness and complete renunciation, the foundations of supernatural power, the powers and strengths, the branches of awakening, the path, the noble truths, and all the conditions of the aspects of Enlightenment. He has an intelligence thoroughly purified by deep calm and intense insight. He sees dependent origination. Realizing the truth, he does not rely on others. He has enjoyed the three gates of complete deliverance; he has realized the way of all things—like an illusion, a mirage, a dream, like the moon reflected in the water, like an echo, or like double vision. O monks, the Bodhisattva naturally abides in the Dharma, naturally abides in wisdom, naturally abides in great qualities; he is naturally concerned with the benefit of beings.

Through the blessing of the Buddhas of the ten directions, verses of exhortation emerged from the songs and music. For the sake of maturing the women of the inner apartments, the Bodhisattva manifested at that moment the four gates of the Dharma, which have been manifested by all Bodhisattvas in their last existence.

What are these four? The first gate of the Dharma is called Complete Purity in Employing the Four Means of Conversion: giving, kind words, helpfulness, and consistency between words and deeds.

He manifested the second gate of the Dharma, called The Irreversible State: it produces the powerful aspiration for inexhaustible knowledge which sustains the lineage of the Three Jewels, the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.

The Bodhisattva manifested the third gate of the Dharma, called Realizing Great Compassion: the intention never to abandon beings.

He manifested the fourth gate of the Dharma, called The Great Arrangement: it produces the strength of certain knowledge of the meaning of the words of all the Teachings on the aspects of Enlightenment.

Having manifested the four gates of the Dharma in order to mature completely the women of the inner apartments, the Bodhisattva then produced through supernatural power hundreds of thousands of similar gates of the Dharma, all emerging from the sounds of the music:

"Through pure devotion, through the highest thoughts,
through compassion for all beings,
the thought of excellent
and supreme Enlightenment takes form."
Such are the words which emerge from the music.

"Purity and faith, devotion, respect,
absence of pride, deference to the spiritual teacher,
and concern for his well-being,

seeking the teachings, mindfulness, and meditation."
Such are the words which emerge.

"Giving, self-control, discipline, good conduct,
patience and valor; meditation and samādhi,
wisdom and skillful means."
Such are the words which emerge.

"Love, compassion, joy, equanimity,
clear knowledge, the four means of conversion,
complete maturation of beings."
Such are the words which emerge.

"Detailed application of mindfulness,
complete renunciation,
degrees of supernatural power,
detailed application of the five strengths and powers,
and the aspects of Enlightenment."
Such are the words which emerge from the music.

"Detailed application of the eightfold path,
deep calm and intense insight,
impermanence, selflessness and suffering,
the suffering of experiencing what is unwanted."
Such are the words which emerge from the music.

"Absence of desire, solitude, knowledge of extinction,
absence of birth, cessation, absence of abode, Nirvāṇa."
Such are the words which emerge from the music.

By the power of the accomplished Bodhisattva,
these words emerge from the music.
After the charming maidens listen and are instructed,
they beg the highest and first of beings
to think of supreme Enlightenment.

O monks, in this way, eighty-four thousand women were brought to complete maturity by the Bodhisattva who had gone into the inner apartments; several hundreds of thousands of gods assembled there were also brought to maturity, and were prepared for perfect, complete, and supreme Enlightenment.

The time having come for the Bodhisattva's departure from home, Hṛīdeva, a devaputra from the realm of Tuṣita, who had obtained irreversible, perfect, and complete Enlightenment, surrounded and preceded by thirty-two thousand devaputras, arrived at the palace during the calm of night to honor the Bodhisattva. And he spoke these verses to the Bodhisattva:

"Death has been demonstrated, O Glorious One!
And birth as well, O Lion of Men!
In order to teach in the women's apartments,
you have conformed to the customs of the world.

"Having obtained the Dharma,
you have matured great numbers of beings
in the worlds of gods and men.
Today is the time and the hour!
Reflect well on the plan to leave your home.

"One who is bound cannot set another free,
and a blind man cannot point out the way.
But one who is free, sets free;
one who has eyes points out the road to the blind.

"Taught by you, may those beings
who are slaves of desire,
attached to homes and riches, to sons and wives,
produce the desire to leave home.

"When they learn that you have renounced
your sovereignty, given up the games of desire,
the four continents, and the seven jewels;
when they learn you have left your family,
how the worlds of men and gods will admire you!

"Taking pleasure in the joys of contemplation,
finding no satisfaction in desires,
you awaken the hundreds of gods and men,
who have slept for so long!

"Youth is soon gone, like the mountain torrent
whose speed is great and strong.
Once your youth has passed,
the thought of leaving home
no longer has anything of beauty in it.

"While you are so handsome and in the flower of youth,
you must fulfill your promise to leave the family:
do what is right for the host of men and gods!

"Just as the salty water of the sea
will never quench one's thirst,
what satisfies you is beyond the world—
venerable wisdom free of defilement.

"You who delight the heart of King Śuddhodana
and the whole kingdom, you with a face
like a hundred-petaled lotus, O Beloved One,
consider well the plan to leave your family.

"Those tormented by the sufferings of emotionality,
tormented by the tight, inextricable bonds of attachment;
establish them quickly, O Hero, in the way of calm;
establish them in the path of deliverance.

"With your skill in the art of medicine,
apply the remedies of the Dharma;
establish quickly in the joy of Nirvāṇa
those who have suffered so long.

"Beings are blind and in darkness,
bound by the net of harmful views,
and heavy with confusion.
With the lamp of wisdom,
quickly bring light to the eyes of gods and men.

"The numerous gods, asuras, and nāgas,
the yakṣas and gandharvas
look on with confidence, thinking:
'We will see the one who has obtained Enlightenment!
We will hear the peerless Dharma!'

"The king of the nāgas will see his dwelling
illuminated by your splendor;
he will then make endless offerings.
Fulfill his vows and his hope!

"The Four Guardians of the World
with their armies await you—
to offer the four begging bowls
to the One whose practice is fulfilled
in front of the tree of Enlightenment.

"Brahmā, with calm demeanor, is waiting;
he has soft words, he has become merciful.

He says to himself: 'I will implore the Greatest of Men
to turn the peerless Wheel of the Dharma.'

"And the gods who venerate Enlightenment
wait at Bodhimaṇḍa, saying:
'He will appear, and we shall see
the Enlightenment of the Buddha!'

"And among the others who saw
the activities in the women's apartments
are those who say: 'Be the one who walks ahead—
be the first among the Bodhisattvas!'

"Remember the soft voice and the sweet words
of the prophecy of Dīpaṁkara;
let the sound of the true voice of a Jina be heard,
true and right, free from error."

The Thirteenth Chapter
Exhortation



Plate 14



Plate 14

स्वप्नपरिवर्तः

། རྨི་ལམ་གྱི་ལེའུ །

Dreams

O MONKS, WHILE THE BODHISATTVA was attending to the devaputra's exhortation, he caused King Śuddhodana to have the following dream: King Śuddhodana saw the Bodhisattva leaving the palace in the quiet of the night, surrounded by a host of gods, and then he saw the prince dressed in the saffron garments of a wandering monk. Awakening suddenly, the king questioned a servant: "Is my young prince in the women's apartment?" The servant replied: "Yes, sire, he is there."

Then the arrow of sorrow pierced the king's heart. "The young prince will surely leave home since the premonitory signs have appeared." And he thought: "No, never! The young prince must not even visit the pleasure garden. Enjoying himself among the women, his pleasure will be such that he will not leave his family."

So King Śuddhodana had three palaces built for the enjoyment of the prince, palaces appropriate to the summer, the winter, and the rainy season. The summer palace was cool, the winter palace was naturally warm, and the palace of the rainy season had both advantages. Five

hundred men were appointed to patrol the staircases of each palace, and the noise made by the patrols as they marched up and down was heard for half a yojana. Everyone was certain the young prince could not now leave home without being seen.

But those who knew the signs foretold: "The prince will leave home through the Gate of Benediction." So the king had heavy gates made for the Gate of Benediction, gates so large that five hundred men were needed to open or close each one. And the noise could be heard for half a yojana. All the while, in the palaces, the young prince involved himself in the incomparable qualities of desire. At all times the young women accompanied him, singing and playing instruments.

Then, O monks, the Bodhisattva said to his charioteer: "Quickly, harness the chariot so that I may go to the garden." And the charioteer went to King Śuddhodana and spoke thus: "Sire, the young prince wishes to go to the pleasure garden."

King Śuddhodana thought: "The young prince has never gone with me to see this beautiful garden; perhaps I should send him there myself. In the pleasure garden, surrounded by the most beautiful women, he will enjoy himself so greatly that he will not think of leaving home." So King Śuddhodana, showing his tenderness and great esteem for the Bodhisattva, sounded the bell and caused this proclamation to be heard throughout the city: "In seven days, the young prince will go to the pleasure garden. Remove all disagreeable things from view, so that the prince will see nothing unpleasant on the way. Decorate the city with everything of beauty."

On the seventh day, the whole city was decorated, and the pleasure garden adorned with cloths of varied colors, with tapestries and parasols, with standards and banners. And the road by which the Bodhisattva proceeded was well-sprinkled with scented water and strewn with fresh flowers. It was made fragrant by cassolettes burning perfumes. The road was adorned with full urns and planted with banana trees hung with colored tapestries, with nets of jeweled bells, and with garlands of large and small pearls. Four divisions of well-ordered troops filled out the procession as it left the interior apartments of the prince. In great pomp, the Bodhisattva departed through the eastern gate of the city toward the pleasure garden.

At that moment, through the power of the Bodhisattva, the devaputras of Śuddhāvāsa manifested an old man on the road. He was broken and decrepit; his veins protruded on his neck, his teeth chattered, and his body was covered with wrinkles. His hair had gone grey; youth had long forsaken him, and from his throat came croaks rather than words. His body bent over, he leaned on a cane, his hands and limbs trembling badly. Upon seeing him, the Bodhisattva asked the charioteer:

"Who is this feeble man, charioteer,
with so little strength, whose flesh and blood
are so dried up, whose muscles sag in his wrinkled skin?
Who can this be whose head is so white,
whose teeth clatter together,
whose body and limbs are so thin,

who leans on a cane and stumbles,
walking with such difficulty?"

The charioteer replied:
"This man, O Lord, has been brought low by old age;
his faculties have been ravaged;
he is sorely afflicted, deprived of strength and energy.
Scorned by his family, he has no protector.
Incapable of acting for himself,
he has been abandoned to the forest like a piece of wood."

The Bodhisattva said:
"Is this his family's custom?
Or do all human beings suffer in such a way?
Tell me the truth at once, starting at the beginning,
and I will reflect on what you say."

The charioteer replied:
"Lord, it is neither the condition of his family alone
nor the condition of this kingdom only.
Old age takes youth from everyone.
Your mother, your father, your relatives, and allies—
all will end in old age.
For living beings there is no other way."

The Bodhisattva exclaimed:
"What a misfortune, charioteer,
for the weak and ignorant creature
who, drunk with the pride of youth, does not see old age!
Turn the chariot around; I will return home.
What do games and pleasures matter to me,
I who will be the abode of old age!"

And the Bodhisattva, turning around the finest of chariots, returned to the city.

Then, O monks, another time, the Bodhisattva in great pomp departed through the southern gate of the city, toward the pleasure garden. There appeared on the road a man who had been stricken by disease. Breathing with difficulty, burning with fever, his body weak and fouled by his own excrement, he had no protector, no asylum. Seeing him, the Bodhisattva questioned the charioteer intently:

"Who is this man, charioteer,
with a body so ravaged and weak,
covered with his own excrement,
whose senses are so weakened,
who breathes with such difficulty?
Who can this be whose limbs are dried up,
whose belly is sunken, who suffers so greatly?"

The charioteer replied:
"This man, Lord, has been struck by disease;
enduring the horror of illness,
he has arrived at the threshold of death.
Deprived of health and well-being,
completely drained of strength,
he is without protection or shelter;
without asylum, he no longer has friends."

The Bodhisattva exclaimed:
"Then health is just the play of a dream!

And the horror of illness has this terrible form!
Seeing such a condition of existence,
can the wise retain the concepts of joy and pleasure?"

Then, O monks, the Bodhisattva turned the best of chariots around and returned to the city.

O monks, on another occasion the Bodhisattva, going in great pomp through the western gate toward the pleasure garden, saw a dead man on a palanquin covered over with a cloth canopy. A multitude of his relatives surrounded him, all weeping, lamenting, and moaning, pulling their hair and covering their heads with dust, beating their breasts as they followed the palanquin. The Bodhisattva questioned the charioteer intently:

"Who, charioteer, is that man on the palanquin?
And who are those people around him,
tearing their hair, throwing dust on their heads,
beating their breasts, and uttering lamentations?"

The charioteer replied:
"This man, Lord, who died in the land of Jambu,
will never again see his mother, his father,
his son or his wife.
He has abandoned his enjoyments, his possessions,
and his house; abandoned his mother,

his father, and all his friends and relatives.
He has gone to another world;
he will not see his relatives again."

The Bodhisattva exclaimed:
"What a pity that old age undermines youth!
What a pity that disease destroys health!
What a pity that man's life does not endure!
What a pity that even the wise are attached to pleasure!

"Old age and disease are always followed by death.
But even were there no old age,
no sickness, and no death,
great suffering would still arise
based on the five aggregates, the elements of existence.
What more can one say?
Let us return—I will think of deliverance!"

And immediately, O monks, the Bodhisattva turned the finest of chariots around and returned to the city.

O monks, still another time, through the power of the Bodhisattva, while the prince was passing through the city's northern gate, going toward the pleasure garden, the devaputras manifested a monk on the road. The Bodhisattva noticed him at once, calm and controlled, restrained and continent. The monk glanced neither here nor there, but only looked ahead the distance of an ox yoke. Walking on the great path of pure action, his movement pleasant to see, his manner agreeable as he looked both left and right; his aspect was beautiful; he glowed while getting up or stretch-

ing out; he glowed as he walked along the road, carrying the alms bowl and wearing religious garments.

Seeing this monk, the Bodhisattva questioned the charioteer intently:

"Charioteer, who is this calm man with the peaceful mind,
who walks with his eyes lowered,
looking only the length of an ox yoke,
dressed in saffron garments,
with demeanor perfectly calm,
neither proud nor haughty,
and carrying an alms bowl?"

The charioteer replied:
"Lord, this man is one of those whom people call bhikṣus.
Having abandoned the joys of desire,
he has perfect and disciplined conduct.
He has become a wandering monk seeking for inner calm.
Without desire he wanders,
without hate he wanders, asking for alms."

The Bodhisattva said:
"What you describe is good, well said, and desirable.
Entering into spiritual practice has always been praised
by the wise, for there one finds what is useful
to oneself and to other beings;
one finds a happy life, the sweet nectar
and the fruit of immortality."

The Bodhisattva then turned his chariot around and returned to the city.

O monks, King Śuddhodana, having learned that the Bodhisattva had seen these forbidden things, had many walls and many solid gates built in order to guard the Bodhisattva with even greater care. He had ditches dug; he established patrols manned by brave soldiers, manned even by well-armed cavalry. To guard the Bodhisattva, he placed four large divisions of soldiers at the intersections and at the four gates of the city, saying: "As long as the Bodhisattva is guarded day and night, he will not leave home!"

In the women's apartments, the king gave orders: "Do not interrupt for an instant the music and the singing. All the pleasures and all the games must continue without ceasing. Use all your feminine wiles; ensnare the young prince, entrance his mind so that he will not leave home to become a wandering monk."

Concerning this it is said:

At the gates stand fighting men
with swords ready at their belts;
mounted on elephants and horses, and riding chariots,
men dressed in armor stand guard,
and others on a file of elephants keep careful watch.
Ditches have been dug, and large enclosures
with passageways; solid doors have been erected:
the noise made opening them can be heard for a krośa.

The anxious Śākyas watch day and night;
the tumult of the army pervades the air.
The atmosphere of the troubled city is agitated with fear:
"May the Pure Being not leave home!
May the descendant of the Śākyas not depart!
May the lineage of kings not be broken!"

And the hosts of maidens receive this order:
"Never cease your songs; keep always ready.
Ensnare his heart with games and pleasures.
Actively use your feminine wiles.
Be on your guard, create many hindrances.
Ensure that the Pure Being will not leave home!"

O great charioteer, these are the premonitory signs
of the time of departure:
the geese, the herons, the peacocks,
the jays, and the parrots
cease their cries and hang their heads;
dreamy and dejected, they perch with sad hearts
on the palaces, at the oval windows,
in the arcades, and on the terraces.

In the reservoirs and ponds,
the brilliant lotuses fade and wither.
Flowers and leaves wilt,
and the trees cease their blooming.
The strings on the lutes and guitars snap in two.
Drums and tambourines, when struck with the hand,
break and make no sound.

The whole troubled city is overcome by sleep;
none have the heart for dancing or singing or pleasure.
With profoundly afflicted heart,
the king himself is given over to somber thoughts:

"Ah! Woe unto the Śākya race!
May these great supernatural apparitions
not destroy us!"

While Gopā and the prince are sleeping,
at the hour of midnight, Gopā sees in a dream
the whole earth shaken, from oceans to mountain peaks;
trees, buffeted by the wind,
fall broken and uprooted to the earth.

The sun and the moon,
together with their attendant stars,
fall from the sky to the earth.
She sees her hair cut off by her left hand,
and she sees her crown fallen.
She sees her hands cut off,
and her feet cut off,
and she sees herself naked.
She sees her pearl necklaces
and her jewels broken and strewn about.

She sees the four feet of her bed broken,
lying on the floor.
She sees the beautifully decorated handle
of the king's parasol broken
and all the ornaments fallen in disarray,
carried away by a river.
She sees her husband's ornaments,
his clothing, and his crown
scattered in disorder on their bed.

She sees beams of light issuing from the city,
which itself is plunged into darkness.
And in her dream the beautiful nets
made of precious materials are broken,

and the hanging pearl garlands have fallen.
Even the great ocean is in turmoil,
and she sees Meru, the king of mountains,
shaken to its foundations.

These are the things
which the daughter of the Śākyas sees in a dream.
And on waking, weeping and with worried eyes,
she says to her husband:
"Tell me, Lord, what will come to pass
from such things as I have dreamed?
My mind is troubled. I cannot see clearly,
and my heart is filled with sorrow."

Hearing these words, the one with the voice
as beautiful as Brahmā's, like the nightingale,
like the sound of the drum, says to Gopā:
"Be happy—these dreams show nothing wrong.
Beings who have formerly practiced good works
are the ones who have such dreams.
Miserable people have no such dreams.

"Since you have seen in a dream
the earth strongly shaken,
and the mountain peaks fallen to earth,
the gods, the nāgas, the rākṣasas,
and the troops of bhūtas will render
the greatest homage to you.

"Since you have seen trees uprooted,
and your hair cut off with your left hand,
soon, Gopā, you will cut the net of the fettering passions;
you will remove the veil of false views
that obscures the conditioned world.

"Since you have seen the moon and sun fallen,
as well as the stars and planets,
soon, Gopā, having conquered the enemies,
the fettering passions, you will know the praise
and honor of the world.

"Since you have seen your pearl necklace scattered,
your body broken and completely unclothed,
soon, Gopā, having cast off your female body,
you will be born as a man.

"Since you have seen the couch with broken legs
and the parasol with the broken jeweled handle,
soon, Gopā, you will see me pass beyond the four currents,
and become the unique parasol for the three worlds.

"Since you have seen the ornaments dragged off
by the river, and my diadem and clothing
scattered on the bed,
soon, Gopā, you will see me,
whose body is adorned with the signs,
praised by all the worlds.

"Since you have seen hundreds of millions of lights
streaming out of the city plunged in darkness,
soon, Gopā, I will cause the light of wisdom
to shine in the world blinded by ignorance and confusion.

"Since you have seen the pearl necklace broken,
as well as the precious golden thread,
Gopā, having cut the net of emotionality,
you will cast away the threads of limited perception
that obscure the conditioned world.

"Because, Gopā, you have always honored me
and surrounded me with the greatest respect,
there are for you neither unfortunate rebirths nor sorrow;
soon you will rejoice, filled with great joy.

"In times past, I gave in abundance,
I guarded my conduct and always acted patiently.
That is why those with faith in me
will all be filled with pleasure and joy.

"For tens of millions of kalpas in the world,
I purified the path of Enlightenment.
That is why, for all who have faith in me,
the paths to the three unfortunate rebirths
will be no more.

"Be happy and do not give in to sadness;
be joyous and give yourself over to cheer.
Soon you will obtain joy and contentment.
Sleep, Gopā; the omens are favorable for you!"

Holy men of the past
who have accumulated many virtuous works
have seen when the time has come to leave home.
These signs of great merit and these dreams
mark the essence of his glory:

He stirs up the water of the four great oceans
with his hands and feet;
the whole world becomes his well-adorned bed,
with Meru, best of mountains, a pillow for his head.

He sees a brilliance spread throughout the world,
bringing light to the deep shadows,

and a parasol comes out of the earth
to shelter the three worlds.
Touched by this light,
the sufferings of those in lower realms are lessened.

Four black and white animals lick his feet;
birds of four colors become a single color.
Climbing a mountain of the most repulsive filth,
he walks there without being soiled.

He sees again in a dream
several hundreds of millions of beings carried away
by the waters of a great river.
Crossing this river,
he creates a vessel to carry others across,
and establishes them in the beautiful land
where there is neither fear nor sorrow.

He sees many beings languishing,
overcome by disease,
deprived of strength and beauty.
Becoming a physician,
he gives medicine in abundance
and cures millions of beings struck by many illnesses.

Seated on the side of Mount Meru,
which serves him as a lion throne,
he sees disciples and gods bowing with folded hands.
He sees his victory in battle
and hears the gods shouting to the sky with joy.

Such are the things the Bodhisattva sees in a dream
because of the perfect achievement
of his pious and meritorious vows.

Those who heard these verses were delighted and thought: "Before long, the Bodhisattva will become the god of gods and men alike."

Chapter Fourteen
Dreams





Plate 15

अभिनिष्क्रमणपरिवर्तः

།མངོན་པར་འབྱུང་བའི་ལེའུ།

The Departure from Home

MEANWHILE, O MONKS, THE BODHISATTVA THOUGHT: "How unseemly and ungrateful if I were to leave without asking my father's permission, without even telling the great king."

And so, in the quiet of the night, the Bodhisattva goes forth from the palace which was his residence and enters the palace of King Śuddhodana. No sooner has he entered than the whole palace is filled with light.

The king, awakened by the light, at once calls out: "O servant! Has the sun just risen? Such a beautiful light is shining!" And the servant replies: "At this moment, sire, not half the night has passed."

"The light of the sun
does not shine through walls or wood.
Its light is hot and burns the body.

If it were daybreak, swans, peacocks,
parrots, cuckoos, and partridges would be calling out.

"But this light, O Master of Men, is pleasant and soft;
it affords delight and exudes well-being and does not burn;
it passes through walls and wood and casts no shadow.
There can be no doubt,
a being endowed with great qualities
has entered the palace."

Troubled, the king looks all around the room—
and then before him there appears
the pure being with lotus eyes.
The king attempts to rise from his bed but cannot,
while the Bodhisattva, pure in mind,
full of respect for his father,

Stands before the king and says to him:
"Lord, the time has come for me to leave home.
Please, create no obstacles. Do not be distressed.
O King, I pray that my family
and the people of the kingdom will restrain their grief."

The king's eyes fill with tears, and he replies:
"Whatever I must do to change your mind,
whatever gift you might desire of me,
you need but speak. I will give you anything.
Take this palace and myself,
along with all my kingdom!"

The Bodhisattva says softly: "Lord, I seek four things.
If you can but give them to me, I shall remain here,
and you will always see me in this house; I will never leave.

"I desire, my lord, that old age
should never take hold of me;
that I should always possess the radiance of youth;
that I should always be in perfect health,
and that sickness never should strike me;
that my life should be endless,
and that there should be no death."

The king is overcome with sorrow at these words:
"What you ask, my son, cannot be done;
in these matters I am powerless.
Even the ṛṣis who live for kalpas
are not free from the fear of old age,
sickness, death, and misfortune."

The young prince replies:
"If you cannot give me these four gifts,
then listen, my lord, and grant this single gift instead:
that on leaving this life,
there may be no more rebirth for me."

When he hears these words from the greatest of beings,
the king restrains his attachment,
and, controlling his love for his son,
he says: "May you do great good in the world.
May you rejoice in liberating beings,
and may all you intend come to pass."

Then, O monks, the Bodhisattva returned to his palace and lay down upon his bed. And no one saw his departure or return.

O monks, at the end of the night, King Śuddhodana assembled the whole Śākya clan and told them what had transpired. "The prince is going to leave. What shall we do?" The Śākyas said: "Sire, we will place a guard; the Śākyas are many, and he is but one—he cannot force his way out."

Then they placed at the eastern gate of the city five hundred young Śākyas, seasoned soldiers experienced in the use of arms, skillful with the bow and arrow, and with strong well-trained bodies like those of the nagnas. Each of the young Śākyas had five hundred chariots as escort, and each chariot, five hundred infantrymen.

At the southern, western, and northern gates as well, five hundred young Śākyas were stationed, seasoned warriors, experienced in the use of arms, skilled with the bow and arrow, and as strong as the great nagnas. Each of the young Śākyas was escorted by chariots, and each chariot by five hundred soldiers. The oldest among the elders of the Śākyas were placed in great numbers at all the crossroads, public squares, and great highways. Even King Śuddhodana, with a retinue of five hundred Śākyas mounted on horses and elephants, stood guard at the door of the palace.

Then Mahāprajāpati Gautamī said to the multitude of serving girls:

"Light the lamps; at the top of the banners
place all the precious jewels; hang garlands of pearls,
and fill the palace with light.

"Let music and songs ring out;
watch ceaselessly during the night,
and guard the prince with care,
so that he cannot leave without being seen.

"Take daggers in your hands;
arm yourselves with swords and javelins,
and guard this cherished son at all costs.

"Close the doors firmly, make fast the bars and chains;
do not open them unless the time is right,
lest the Pure Being be lost.

"Adorn yourselves with care.
Put on necklaces of precious stones and pearls,
garlands, belts, and earrings, seal rings and anklets.

"Eager to go to the aid of gods and men,
he will be like a crazed elephant.
If suddenly he attempts to go outside,
much unhappiness will come to pass.
So take great care!

"Let women carrying lances
surround the couch of this pure being;
do not let sleep overcome you—
let your eyes hover over him, like butterflies.

"Cover the couch with a jeweled lattice
to prevent the prince from rising.
Play the flutes loudly, do not doze or sleep.
Guard the prince carefully!

"Help each other ward off sleep,
lest he abandon home and kingdom and heritage.

"If he leaves, the royal palace will be deprived of joy,
and the long-enduring lineage of the king will end!"

Then, O monks, twenty-eight great chiefs of the army of yakṣas and five hundred sons of the yakṣinī Hāritī, preceded by Pāñcika, chief of the yakṣa army, assembled in the palace and spoke thus: "Today, friends, the Bodhisattva will leave home. Be ready now to present him with offerings."

And the Four Great Kings, having entered the royal palace of Aḍakavatī, said to the assembly of yakṣas: "Today, friends, the Bodhisattva leaves home; as he leaves, you must lift up the hooves of his horse."

And the assembly of yakṣas said:

"This most exalted of beings is immutable.
this body is as solid as diamond and unshakable;
he has the power of Nārāyaṇa;
strength, energy, and gravity are his.
The first among mountains, the great Meru,
could be uprooted and carried away into heaven,
but he could not be moved at all!
His Buddha-qualities far outweigh Mount Meru,
as he has taken refuge in virtue and knowledge."

Vaiśravaṇa said: "Men filled with pride
are the ones for whom the master is heavy.

Those who abide in gentleness and respect
recognize that he is light.
Put on zeal and respect, and with the help of reflection,
you will know that he is as light
as a tuft of cotton that floats through the sky.

"I will go ahead, and you lift up the horse.
Now, when the Bodhisattva is leaving home,
let us amass many good works."

Meanwhile, O monks, Śakra, the lord of the gods, said to the Thirty-three gods: "Today, friends, the Bodhisattva will leave home. On this occasion, one should be ready to make many offerings."

Then a devaputra named Śāntasumati spoke: "For my part, I will put to sleep all the men and women, young and old, in the great city of Kapilavastu."

A devaputra named Lalitavyūha spoke: "I will make all noise imperceptible—no sound will be heard from horses or elephants; from donkeys, camels, oxen, or buffaloes; from men, women, boys, or girls."

A devaputra named Vyūhamati spoke: "And I, from the sky, will decorate the route taken by the Bodhisattva as he leaves home. Seven great chariots will surround him, sparkling with the brilliance of precious jewels and sun crystals. The road by which the Bodhisattva departs will be strewn with flowers and decorated with unfurled banners and open parasols, with cassolettes of varied scents."

The king of the elephants named Airāvaṇa spoke thus: "And I on my own trunk will have a storied palace built, three hundred and twenty-two yojanas high. There the apsarases will make a respectful escort for the Bodhisattva with song and the music of many instruments."

Śakra himself, the lord of the gods, spoke: "I will open the gates and point out the road."

The devaputra named Dharmacārin spoke: "I will cause the women's apartments to appear disagreeable."

Sañcodaka, the devaputra, said: "I will then lift the Bodhisattva from his bed."

Varuṇa, Manasvin, Sāgara, Anavatapta, Nanda, and Upananda, all kings of the nāgas, spoke: "As offerings to the Bodhisattva, we will produce a cloud of incense and a rain of Uraga sandalwood powder."

Such, O monks, were the resolutions made and settled by the gods, the nāgas, the yakṣas, and the gandharvas.

Dwelling at ease in the palace, surrounded by the sound of music in the women's apartments, the Bodhisattva reflected on being useful to all beings; he entered into the thought of the Dharma and recalled the meaning of his four prayers of the past:

"In the past, desiring the sovereignty of the freely-arising being, and aspiring to omniscience, I donned the armor of virtue. Beholding the suffering of beings, I prayed: 'Alas for the world bound in the great prison of rebirth! May I completely destroy this prison and call out for deliverance from these bonds! May I be able to free all beings chained tight by the strong bonds of desire!' " Such is the mean-

ing of the first prayer of times past, which he now brought to mind.

"Alas for the world which has entered the thick jungle of ignorance! May I produce the great lamp of wisdom and the great light of the Dharma for those with eyes blinded by darkness and veiled by the film of ignorance, for those deprived of the eye of wisdom and blinded by the shadows of confusion. May I produce the remedies of wisdom, knowledge, and means, the remedy of the eye of wisdom and the three doors of deliverance. After dispelling the shadows and darkness of ignorance and clearing away the great fog of confusion, may I purify the eye of wisdom." Such is the meaning of the second prayer of times past, which he now brought to mind.

"Alas for the world full of egotism and self-love! It has unfurled the banner of pride and pursues its self-concerns. May I overturn the banner of pride and self-concern and show the honorable path to those who carry the flag of error, who hold mistaken views of mind and consciousness." Such is the meaning of the third prayer of times past, which he now brought to mind.

"Alas for the world which is not at peace, whose fabric is a mass of tangled threads! Beings are always coming and going from this world to the world beyond, running around from that place to this place, unable to free themselves from the round of rebirth that turns like the illusory wheel of fire made by spinning a torch. May I make the light of the Dharma shine, bringing peace and producing the contentment of wisdom!" Such is the meaning of the fourth prayer of times past which he now brought to mind.

These are the four prayers made in previous lives.

At that instant, the women's apartments were transformed and put into great disorder by the devaputra Dharmacārin and by the gods of the Śuddhāvāsa realm. The devaputras hovering in the sky revealed the women's unpleasant and disgusting aspects and addressed these verses to the Bodhisattva:

The devaputras, great magic makers,
say to the one with long eyes
like the petals of a blooming lotus:
"How can you be joyful
in the midst of this cemetery in which you live?"

Admonished by the masters of the gods,
he looks about the women's apartments,
and finding it so, he says:
"I do, in truth, dwell in the middle of a cemetery!"

The Bodhisattva looked at the entire gathering of women and studied them intently. He saw that some had torn clothing and disheveled hair; their ornaments and diadems lay on the floor. He saw that some had ugly shoulders and long arms dangling; some had ugly or discolored faces or flawed bodies. Some while sleeping had crossed their eyes, and others were drooling. He saw women snoring, laughing, mumbling, coughing, and gritting their teeth. Some had

their legs askew and heads held hanging, while others had covered their uneven features. Some were lying naked, coarse bodies in view. Some had fallen onto their sides, clutching drums, or were slumped over the lutes, over the vīnās and the vallakīs; some were gripping other instruments such as the kimpalas, nakulas, sampas, and tāḍāvacaras; some clenched flutes between their teeth. Some were blinking their eyes, and others were twisting their faces. Struck by the sheer ugliness of the women thus transformed as they lay spread out upon the floor, the Bodhisattva indeed had the impression of a cemetery.

Concerning this it is said:

The Protector of the World gazes upon them
and sighs with compassion:
"Alas! These creatures are miserable!
How can one find pleasure with troops of rākṣasīs?

"Those whose judgment has been wrapped
in the shadows of extreme confusion
take the qualities of desire for virtues;
like birds that enter traps, they lose their freedom."

By means of the luminous gates of the Dharma, the Bodhisattva again examined the women's apartments and lamented with great compassion:

“These ignorant ones die like prisoners who have been condemned to death.

These ignorant ones are full of desire like idiots clutching pretty vases full of vomit.

These ignorant ones are drowning like elephants who are in deep water.

These ignorant ones are shackled like criminals in prison.

These ignorant ones rejoice like wild boars cavorting in the midst of manure.

These ignorant ones jump with excitement like dogs in the midst of bones.

These ignorant ones throw themselves like moths into the burning flames.

These ignorant ones are bound like monkeys who have been caught in a trap.

These ignorant ones are caught like fish in a net.

These ignorant ones are cut in pieces like sheep brought to a slaughterhouse.

These ignorant ones are transfixed like evildoers who have been impaled on a spike.

These ignorant ones are distressed like aged elephants who are stuck in a swamp.

These ignorant ones are bereft like travelers whose ship has broken up on the ocean.

These ignorant ones fall into chasms like those who are blind.

These ignorant ones are exhausted like water which disappears into the opening of the Pātāla underworld.

These ignorant ones are consumed by fire like the great earth destroyed at the end of a kalpa.

These ignorant ones are whirled about like the spinning wheel of the potter.

These ignorant ones go astray like the blind who wander into the mountains.

These ignorant ones run in circles like dogs tied on a leash.

These ignorant ones diminish like the waning moon during its dark fortnight.

These ignorant ones perish like grass and trees drying up in the heat of summer.

These ignorant ones are devoured like serpents that are killed by the garuḍa.

These ignorant ones are mangled like sailors caught by the great makara.

These ignorant ones are ravaged like caravans stripped bare by a troop of robbers.

These ignorant ones are broken like palm trees by the wind.

These ignorant ones are killed like small wild beasts that are devoured by serpents.

These ignorant ones are harmed by sweetness like someone licking honey off the blade of a razor.

These ignorant ones are carried away like pieces of wood by the current of a river.

These ignorant ones sport and play like little children with their own excrement.

These ignorant ones are pushed about like elephants controlled by the driver's hook.

These ignorant ones are deceived like fools led by rascals.

These ignorant ones destroy the roots of virtue like passionate gamblers who lose their fortunes.

These ignorant ones are devoured like merchants fallen prey to rākṣasīs."

In this way, the Bodhisattva completely analyzed the women's apartments with thirty-two similes, and when he formed for himself a clear consciousness of the impurity of the body and of what is debased, revulsion welled up within him. Reflecting on his own body, he saw clearly its afflictions and cut off all inclination toward it. He formed for himself a clear consciousness of the pure and penetrated the idea of the impure; he saw that the body, from the soles of the feet to the confines of the brain, is born from the impure, proceeds from the impure, and always lets flow what is impure. And at that moment, he pronounced these verses:

"The body, born from the field of karma,
issuing from the water of desire, is characterized by decay.
Disfigured by tears and sweat, by saliva, urine, and blood,
filled with filth from the belly,
with marrow, blood, and liquids from the brain,
always letting impurities flow—
bodies are the abode of impure things and ugly stenches.

"Covered with leathery skin
punctured by pores, teeth, and hair;
weakened by the accumulation
of excrement, pus, fat, and saliva;
held together like a machine by sinews and nerves;
made beautiful by the flesh
but subject to the pains of disease;
always tormented by hunger and thirst—

"This body with its many apertures
is the abode of old age and death.
Having seen this, what wise man
would not look upon his own body as an enemy?"

And the Bodhisattva recalled passing from one body to another.

In the expanse of the sky, the devaputras spoke thus to the devaputra Dharmacārin: "Friend, what is this? Siddhārtha delays: though he has examined in detail the women's apartments, he has even smiled. Seeing such unpleasantness, how can he go back to it?

"Ah, truly, he is as deep as the ocean; it is impossible to take his measure. And truly, the mind of the one without attachment does not attach itself to sense objects. No! Exhorted by the gods, he surely does not forget his former promise."

Dharmacārin said: "Need we say more? In the past so great was his detachment in acting for the sake of Enlight-

enment that he even left his family and gave up all he had. Having already developed true detachment, would he not possess it now, in his last existence?"

Meanwhile, monks, the Bodhisattva, who had attained certitude, whose mind was made up, whose thought was firm, did not delay. He stretched his crossed legs and arose, facing the east where the music had sounded. With his right hand he parted the jeweled lattice and went to the palace roof. There, he joined his palms and, with the mind of all the Buddhas, made obeisance to all the Buddhas. Looking into the expanse of the heavens, he saw the master of the gods, Daśaśatanayana, surrounded by a hundred thousand gods holding flowers, incense, perfumes, and garlands, aloes, perfumed powders, and monastic garments, parasols, standards, banners, earrings of flowers, and garlands of precious stones. Looking down, he saw Daśaśatanayana bowing before him. He then saw the Four Guardians of the World, accompanied by troops of yakṣas, rākṣasas, gandharvas, and nāgas, fitted out in solid breastplates and coats of mail, holding swords, bows and arrows, javelins, and lances with two and three points. As was fitting, all laid down their crowns and diadems of pearls and bowed before the Bodhisattva. Puṣya, the chief constellation, rose over the horizon flanked by Candra, the god of the moon, and Sūrya, the god of the sun. Then, just at the hour of midnight, the Bodhisattva called Chandaka.

"Chandaka, the blessings are moving
toward their culmination!

Today without doubt the great purpose will be achieved.
Chandaka, do not delay!
Bring me the king of horses decorated with his ornaments."

When Chandaka heard these words, his heart was troubled: "Where will you go, O Lion of Men? You with the long lashes, with the eyes as beautiful as the lotus petal, you with the face as pleasing as a new white lotus? You are like the kumuda flower open to the moon; you are like the full autumn moon itself when the sun has set, flawless, and as brilliant as pure gold. You who blaze like fire sprinkled with offerings of pure butter; you who sparkle like the diamond and the flash of lightning; you with the gait of a wild elephant, of a playful elephant; you with the bearing of the swan, the manner of the king of beasts—where will you go?"

The Bodhisattva replied:

"Chandaka, for the sake of this moment,
I have in past lives given up my hands and feet,
my eyes, my head, my body,
my children, and my dear wives,
royalty, wealth, gold, and beautiful dress.

"I have given up elephants with rich trappings
and horses who had strength and valor,
and the speed of the wind.

For tens of millions of kalpas,
I have guarded virtue and meditated on patience,
gained the strength of valor, meditation, and wisdom.

"I have attained supreme Enlightenment, happy and calm.
The time has come for me to deliver beings
who have entered the trap of old age and death!"

Chandaka said: "I have heard it said, my lord, that when you were born, you were examined by brāhmins who knew the signs, and they predicted in the presence of King Śuddhodana that you would increase the prosperity of the king's family.

"When Śuddhodana asked how that could happen, the brāhmins replied: 'Your son was born shining with the signs of a hundred merits. He will be a Cakravartin king, sovereign of the four continents, possessor of the seven treasures. But if, after seeing the world afflicted with sorrow, he leaves his family and abandons the women's apartments, he will obtain Enlightenment, where there is neither old age nor death, and will quench the thirst of sentient beings with the water of the Dharma.'

"Ah, well, my lord. There is the prediction, such as it is. But listen to me, for I seek to help you."

The Bodhisattva asked: "How is that?"

Chandaka replied: "My lord, consider what some people undertake as penance and austerity. They wear clothing made of tree bark and deer skins, and a braid of hair for a

crown; they grow long their fingernails, their hair, and their beards. They submit their bodies to miserable tortures by their own choice, and they devote themselves to terrible penitences. Lord, why would one seek to obtain in this way the happiness of men and gods when one already has such happiness?

"This kingdom is large, flourishing, and prosperous, abundant in everything, filled with happy men and other living beings. And these grounds! They are the most beautiful among the most beautiful—bedecked with all sorts of flowers and fruits, filled with flocks of marvelous singing birds.

"And the lakes! They are embellished with lotuses of blue and yellow, red and white, enlivened with the calls of geese, peacocks, and cuckoos, cakravākas, herons, and jays; they are surrounded by gardens of coral trees and flowering trees, mango trees, aśokas, magnolias, red amaranths, tilakas, and keśaras.

"And the parks! They are marked out as huge chessboards for games, surrounded with jeweled tables, and sheltered by jeweled lattice work, ready to be enjoyed in any season, spring, summer, autumn, or winter.

"And the great palaces! They are like Mount Kailāśa, like Vaijayanta; they are protected by the law, the good law. In these palaces cares and worries are banished. And the palaces are decorated with terraces, porticos, and arcades, with ornamental windows and storied pavilions, with tiny bells ringing from the lattice work.

"And the apartments of the women! Where the women dance so well and raise their voices in harmony; there they

play instruments—drums and tambourines, lutes, flutes, and cymbals; there the time is spent sweetly, in laughter and dance, in play and rejoicing.

"And you, Lord! You are young and slender, in the flower of youth; your body is graceful and handsome; your hair is black, and you have not toyed with desires. Give yourself over to pleasure like Indra, the master of the gods. Later, when we have grown old, we will leave home to wander as monks." And at that moment, he recited this verse:

"Knowing the rites of pleasure, O Lord,
give yourself over to pleasure,
like the master of the gods in the Tridaśa realm.
When we have grown old,
we will undertake austerities."

The Bodhisattva replied: "Enough, Chandaka. The objects of desire do not endure; they are impermanent, inconstant, and of a changing nature; they are quickly gone; they move as rapidly as the mountain torrent; like the dew drop, they soon disappear. Like the empty fist which deceives a child, they are without essence; like the hollow stem of a kadalī plant, they are empty. Like clay vases, their nature is fragile; like autumn clouds, they appear for an instant and then are no more; like flashes of lightning, they

do not last long. Like a vessel full of poison, they produce only misery; like poison ivy, they bring discomfort.

"The objects desired by those of weak intelligence are like water bubbles, of a quickly changing nature. They are like a mirage produced by an error of consciousness; like an illusion caused by an error of the mind; like dreams which hold one enthralled by an error of sight. Like the ocean, they are incapable of giving satisfaction and difficult to fill; like salty water, they produce thirst. Like the head of a serpent, they are dangerous to touch; like a great precipice, they are avoided by the wise.

"Having recognized that desires are accompanied by dangers, quarrels, faults, and vices, the wise avoid them, scholars disparage them, the noble push them away. The intelligent abandon them, but they are grasped by fools and supported by the ignorant." And at that moment he recited this verse:

"The wise avoid them like the head of a serpent;
they push them away like a vessel full of vomit.
O Chandaka, since I know that desires destroy all virtue,
they bring me no more joy."

Chandaka groaned as if pierced by an arrow; his eyes filled with tears, and overcome with grief, he said:

"Lord, some who think that way practice austerities.
They wear black gazelle skins and braid their hair.

They grow their hair and fingernails
and their beards very long.
Their bodies are emaciated and covered only with bark.
Locked in their ascetic practice,
they eat only small amounts of millet or other grains.
With heads bowed, they observe the frugality of cattle.

"With the same goal in view,
we also, the principal beings, the most elevated,
along with the great Cakravartins,
the Guardians of the World,
Śakra who holds the vajra,
and Yāma, lord of the gods of the Nirmita realm,
we all desire the joys of contemplation
in the world of Brahmā,
thinking to become like the most powerful gods,
who are free from all strife.

"O Best of Men, this kingdom is yours,
flourishing, extensive, prosperous—
these delightful gardens, these parks,
this palace built like Mount Vaijayanta.
The women's quarters are yours,
where the women know so well how to mix
concerts of songs and instruments
with dance and enjoyment.
Enjoy these pleasures.
Do not wander forth as a monk, O Excellent One!"

The Bodhisattva replied:
"Chandaka, listen! Because of desire,
I have endured hundreds of sufferings.
In the course of my previous lives,
I experienced imprisonments,

hindrances, blows, and threats,
and endured them all patiently.

"Long ago, I was bound by the net
of ignorance and confusion,
and under the influence of heedlessness.
The Dharma drew me forth from ignorance,
and I no longer grasped at sensation
or objects of consciousness.

"All things are changing, unstable, like clouds,
like flashes of lightning, like drops of dew;
they are vain and hollow, without essence,
without identity, entirely empty by nature.

"My mind is not attached to objects of the senses.
Chandaka, bring me Kaṇṭhaka,
the best of horses, adorned with ornaments.
By the fulfillment of the blessings of my thoughts,
I shall be the Muni who conquers everything,
Lord of the Dharma, King of the Dharma."

Chandaka said:
"Do you not see on her couch, the beautiful one,
with eyes like the petals of a lotus in bloom,
adorned with garlands of pearls and precious stones,
sparkling like the lightning which flashes
through the cloud drifts in the heavens?

"And these flutes, these drums which make pleasing sounds,
these musical instruments and these melodies,
the calls of the partridge
and the warblings of the nightingale,
this dwelling like that of the women of the kinnaras:
how can you abandon it all?

"Masses of flowers: jasmine, blue lotuses, aloes,
magnolias, soft scented garlands, and black aloes;
cassolettes where the best perfumes burn,
and the finest of ointments: do you not see them all?

"Savory dishes with the most excellent taste,
prepared with delicate spices, sugared drinks:
do you not see even them? Lord, where will you go?

"These fine and soft garments
woven with silver and gold,
warm and comfortable in cold and heat alike,
impregnated with the essence of Uraga sandalwood:
do you not see even them? Lord, where will you go?

"And what of the five qualities of desire,
which for you, Lord, are as abundant
as those in the lands of the gods?
Rejoice in possession of joy and well-being;
let the prince of the Śākyas go later to the forest."

The Bodhisattva replied:
"Chandaka, for immeasurable and endless kalpas,
I have tasted all the divine and human desires
arising from form, sound, smell, taste, and touch,
and I have not been satisfied!

"As son of the highest of kings,
I ruled over a great kingdom
composed of the four continents.
I was then a Cakravartin king
in possession of the seven precious objects,
living within the women's apartments.
I have ruled over the masters
of the Tridaśa realm and the Suyāma gods.

"After passing from their midst,
I became the highest among the Nirmitas,
holiest of the gods of transformation.
I have already enjoyed the greatest prosperities
which could delight the heart;
I have had the power of the greatest of gods
and mastery of their realm, and I was not satisfied.

"All the more today—how could I be satisfied
by depending on these demeaning conditions?
The ferocious emotions in this wilderness
of misery and suffering always carry one away
in despair and confusion.

"In the darkness of ignorance and confusion,
there is no refuge and no protector.
Pursued by the fear of old age, illness, and death,
struck on all sides by the suffering of birth,
persecuted by suffering,
beings continually harm each other
and are harmed in turn.

"When I realized this, I turned
to the good ship of the Dharma
and gathered the timbers of giving,
good conduct, discipline, patience, and valor;
solidly I secured these timbers with the highest intentions,
deep and solid as a diamond.

"Entering this ship, I crossed over by myself,
and now I will give passage to beings without number,
beings caught in the current of rebirth,
troubled by the sorrow of rebirth,
fearful of the waves of anger and the monsters of passion
that hinder passage over the turbulent waters.

"This is my thought:
since I by myself have crossed this ocean of existence,
infested with the monsters of harmful views
and the rākṣasas of emotional conflict,
I will establish all beings in the happy place
where there is no more old age or death!"

Then Chandaka spoke, groaning deeply: "Lord, is this your firm resolution?"

The Bodhisattva replied: "Listen, Chandaka, to what I have resolved: I shall not waver from my unwavering intent to deliver beings, for my intent is firm, like Meru, the king of mountains.

Chandaka said: "What is the intent of the noble lord?"

The Bodhisattva replied:
"Even in the midst of a rain
of stones and arrows, picks and axes,
lightning and burning rocks of molten iron,
even if the flaming peaks of mountains
were to fall on my head,
I would never again conceive
the desire to be a householder!"

At this very moment, the gods in the sky
cried out with great joy and rained down flowers,
saying: "Victory! Victory is yours.
You possess the highest intelligence;

you show compassion for all sentient beings;
you make fearless those without a protector!

"The Best of Men is not attached
to the objects of the senses;
his mind is no more attached
than a comet to the darkness of the sky.
Like the new lotus, spotless and pristine in the water,
he is untouched by attachment."

O monks, when the devaputra Śāntamati and the devaputra Lalitavyūha saw the Bodhisattva's determination, they caused all the noise in the great and excellent city of Kapilavastu to cease and plunged the men and women, the youths and maidens into deep sleep.

O monks, the Bodhisattva realized that all the inhabitants of the city were sleeping. He knew that the hour of midnight was at hand, and also that the moon was in the constellation Puṣya. It was indeed the time to leave home. The Bodhisattva said to Chandaka: "Chandaka, please do not try to discourage me, but prepare Kaṇṭhaka; bring him to me without delay."

The Bodhisattva had no sooner uttered these words than the Four Guardians of the World, who had been listening, arrived from their dwellings to pay him homage. Quickly, quickly they came to the large city of Kapilavastu, each having made his preparations.

From the East, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, the great master of the gandharvas, arrived in the company of several hundreds of

thousands of millions of gandharvas, playing sweet music and songs of all sorts. As soon as he had arrived, he circumambulated the great city of Kapilavastu, and returning to the eastern horizon, he made obeisance to the Bodhisattva.

From the South, the great king Virūḍhaka arrived with several hundreds of thousands of millions of kumbhāṇḍas, holding garlands and necklaces of pearls and diamonds and vases filled with all kinds of scented water. As soon as he had arrived, he circumambulated the great city of Kapilavastu, and returning to the southern horizon, he made obeisance to the Bodhisattva.

From the West, the great king Virūpākṣa arrived with several hundreds of thousands of millions of nāgas, holding garlands and necklaces of pearls and diamonds, raining down flowers and perfumed powders, and sending forth sweetly scented breezes. As soon as Virūpākṣa had arrived, he circumambulated the great city of Kapilavastu, and returning to the western horizon, he made obeisance to the Bodhisattva.

From the North, the great king Kubera arrived with several hundreds of millions of yakṣas, holding in their hands jeweled lamps, butter lamps, and lighted torches. Fitted out in strong breastplates, the yakṣas were armed with weapons of all kinds, with bows and arrows, picks and javelins, lances with two and three points, discuses, and projectiles. As soon as Kubera had arrived, he circumambulated the great city of Kapilavastu, and, returning to the northern horizon, he made obeisance to the Bodhisattva.

Then Śakra, master of the gods, arrived, together with the Thirty-three gods, holding heavenly flowers, incense, ointments, perfumes, garlands, perfumed powders, and cloth-

ing, parasols, standards, banners, earrings of flowers, and other ornaments. As soon as he had arrived, he circumambulated the great city of Kapilavastu, and proceeding with his following to the zenith of the sky, he made obeisance to the Bodhisattva.

O monks, when Chandaka heard the Bodhisattva's words, his eyes filled with tears, and he addressed the Bodhisattva in this way: "Lord, you who know time, who know the hour, who know the favorable moment, this is not the favorable time to leave. Why then do you give the order for it?"

The Bodhisattva answered him: "Chandaka, the time has come."

"What time has come, Lord?"

The Bodhisattva patiently replied: "In seeking to help all living beings, I made the prayer long ago that when I obtained Enlightenment, free from old age and death, I might free living beings. The time has now arrived. This is that very culmination."

Concerning this it is said:

The gods are in haste:
the gods of the earth and air, the Guardians of the World,
Śakra, the master of the gods with his following,
the Yāma and Tuṣita gods, and the Nirmita
and Parinirmita gods, Varuṇa and Manasvin also,
the king of the nāgas, Anavatapta as well as Sāgara;
all are in haste to present their offerings
at the moment of the Great Being's departure from home.

And the gods from the realm of form,
who act always with calm
and remain in the state of contemplation,
they, too, are in haste to offer homage
to the Highest of Beings,
worthy of the homage of the three worlds.

The myriad Bodhisattvas, his companions in actions
of former times, come from the ten directions
to see the departure of the Jina from home
and to pay homage, as is fitting.

And the magnanimous master of the guhyakas also,
carrying a burning vajra, stands in the sky,
his body clothed in armor.
Endowed with strength, energy, and courage,
he holds in his secret hand a brilliant vajra.

The devaputras Candra and Sūrya,
standing on the right and left,
join their palms in adoration and reflect
upon the departure of the Bodhisattva.

The constellation Puṣya with his following
transforms his majestic body
and stands before this holiest of men.
He speaks with an intonation
which goes straight to the heart:

"Today your blessings and benedictions
have been fulfilled: Puṣya is in view.
It is the favorable moment to depart,
and I, too, will go with you.
May you encounter no obstacles, O Destroyer of Desire.

"The devaputra Sañcodaka has encouraged you;
arise quickly, you who are outstanding
in strength and courage!
Deliver all beings harmed by suffering!
The time to leave home has come."

Hundreds of millions of gods rain down delightful flowers;
surrounded by gods, the Bodhisattva
sits cross-legged in the best of positions,
shining with brilliant splendor.

But none in the city sees him.
All the men and women, youths and maidens,
having strayed from right action,
are asleep, their minds heavy and dull.
Elephants, horses, oxen, jays, parrots, herons,
and peacocks are all asleep, their minds slow and heavy.

And the sons of the Śākyas,
armed with two-pointed lances solid as diamonds,
mounted on elephants, horses, and chariots,
all sleep soundly in front of the gates they guard.

The king and his men, and the attendants of the prince,
all are sound asleep, and so are the women attendants.
They have removed their clothing,
and sleeping deeply, they sense nothing.

When the midnight hour has passed,
the Bodhisattva speaks to Chandaka
with a voice like Brahmā's,
with words that touch the heart
and resound like the song of the nightingale:
"Please, Chandaka, bring me

my good horse Kaṇṭhaka,
decorated with all his ornaments.
Do not make trouble. If you love me,
bring him to me quickly."

Chandaka's eyes fill with tears when he hears these words,
and he says to his master:
"Where will you go, O Best Charioteer of Beings?
Why have you need of a horse?
You who know the time, who know the moment,
it is not the time to go anywhere,
not the time to practice the Dharma.
The gates are closed, strengthened with solid bars.
Who then will open them?"

Chandaka brightens at this thought
and looks toward the doors.
But the power of Śakra's mind has flung them open,
and Chandaka falls again into despair:
"Ah! Misfortune! Who is my friend?
What shall I do? Where shall I turn?
This glorious being will listen
only to the awful words of Śakra.

"These four strong armies of troops— what good are they?
The king, the king's men,
and the troops of the royal prince—none see him.
The women are plunged into sleep.
Yaśovatī has been put to sleep by the gods.
Ah! Misfortune! Let him go then!
Let the prayer which he previously made be fulfilled!"

Joyfully hundreds of millions of gods urge Chandaka:
"Please Chandaka, bring him the excellent Kaṇṭhaka.
Do not oppose the Guide of Beings.

See, Chandaka, the gods and the asuras
have sounded their drums and their conches,
their musical instruments by the hundreds of thousands,
and yet the great city does not awaken.
The gods have put everyone to sleep!

"See, Chandaka, in the pure air, a divine light is shining.
Look upon the Bodhisattvas who have come
by the millions to do homage.
Look upon Śakra, the husband of Śacī:
he is shining, standing at the door, surrounded by his army.
The gods also, the asuras, the troops
of the kinnaras, all have come to do homage!"

Chandaka hears these words of the gods,
yet he whispers thus to the horse, Kaṇṭhaka:
"When the great Charioteer of Beings approaches,
neigh loudly."
And decorating with gold the hooves of the horse
who is the color of rain clouds,
he sorrowfully brings the saddled horse
to the one who is an ocean of virtue.

"You who possess the best signs,
who give aid to all, here is your fine horse.
May the prayer you made previously be accomplished.
May all who create obstacles be appeased.
May your vow be fulfilled!
May you give peace, high states of being,
and joy to all beings."

The Bodhisattva arises from his couch
and mounts the king of horses,
white as the disk of the full moon.
And the whole earth shakes in six ways.

The Guardians of the World lift
the best of horses with their hands,
pure as a spotless lotus.

As Śakra and Brahmā go before him to show the best route,
a pure and brilliant light illuminates the earth,
and all the beings on the lower paths
become peaceful and joyful:
they are no longer caught in the fettering passions.
Flowers fall like rain;
millions of musical instruments resound;
gods and asuras offer praise
and three times circumambulate the city.
All are filled with joy.

The principal god of the great city,
his spirit dejected, approaches
the Great Man just as he is leaving.
Standing in front of the Bodhisattva,
he speaks his sorrow to the one with a face like a lotus:

"Deprived of you, the land is bleak;
the city is filled with shadows: it shines no more.
There will no longer be joy or pleasure for me here,
if you leave this home!

"O you whose splendor is infinite,
no longer will you hear those songs
and words of benediction
which used to awaken you in the inner apartment,
where the singing of birds
and the music of flutes filled the air.

"When you have left, O Destroyer of Fetters,
you will no longer see the hosts of suras and siddhas;

there will be no more offerings of parasols and banners;
there will no longer be the scent of divine perfume.

"This abode has been abandoned like a withered garland,
like a theater after the dance is done.
With you departed, there is no longer
either splendor or joy.

"The entire city will become a wilderness.
You have taken its brilliance and strength;
it will shine no more.
The prediction of the ṛṣis
that you would be a mighty ruler
has proved false today.

"With your departure,
the Śākyas are no longer a force on this earth!
This breaks the lineage of the king.
This dashes the hopes of the Śākyas!

"Great tree of virtue, O Spotless One,
free from all blemish, I will travel with you,
since you are sure to go!
But better to be kind and merciful–
pray, look once more upon your palace!"

And looking again at the palace,
the Wise One softly pronounces these words:
"I will not return to the city of Kapilavastu
without obtaining that which puts an end
to birth and death.

"I will not stand, sleep, or walk
toward the city of Kapilavastu
until I have obtained supreme Enlightenment,
in which old age and death are no more!"

As the Bodhisattva, Lord of the World, goes forth,
the apsarases traveling through the sky sing his praises:
"O Great Field of Virtue worthy of great offerings!
O field of those who aspire to virtue,
dispenser of the fruit of immortality!

"Over many tens of millions of kalpas,
through compassion for living beings,
you have completely obtained Enlightenment
by giving, self-control, and practice.
Perfectly pure, you guard your conduct:
faithful to your vows, impartial in your actions,
lacking all interest in desire or pleasure.

"With the aim of protecting all beings,
you have always spoken with patience,
even to those who came to cut off your limbs.
You know neither anger nor fury.

"For tens of millions of kalpas,
you have acted with vigor and never despaired.
Having completely obtained Enlightenment,
you have made tens of millions of offerings.

"Always firm in contemplation,
your mind tranquil and calm,
you have burned away all emotionality
and have delivered tens of millions of beings.
Possessing wisdom, you are detached;
free from conceptualization and judgment,
your mind is liberated. You will be a Jina, freely arising.

"You have attained the supreme limit of compassion:
your heart is always full of love.
Satisfied, meditating on detachment,

you know the path of brahmacarya.
You are the god above gods, worthy of the homage of gods,
your mind virtuous, pristine, and completely pure.
You have reached the supreme limit
of hundreds of thousands of virtues.

"Refuge of those tormented by fear,
lamp for those who are blind,
guide for those who are lost,
physician for those long ill,
you are a holy king of the Dharma,
like Indra with the thousand eyes,
like the freely-arising Brahmā.

"Your body and mind are pure;
you are firm and your knowledge abundant;
powerful is your mind and free from desire.
You are a conquering hero,
the destroyer of emotionality,
which is the invincible enemy.

"You are like a lion who feels no fear.
Like the patient leader of an elephant herd,
your mind is well tamed and free of anger.

"You are like the moon which illumines,
like the sun which shines clearly,
like the lamp which gives light,
like the stars which clear away darkness.

"Immaculate lotus!
Flower whose scent is good conduct!
Teacher unshakable as Meru!
As nourishing as the earth,
you are as unwavering as a jewel mine.

"You have overcome the demon of emotionality
and the demon of the aggregates;
you have overcome the demon of death
and conquered Mārā.
You are the leader of the great caravan.
For those in the lower states of being,
you will soon point out the eightfold path,
the best of ways.

"Destroyer of old age, death, and the fettering passions,
you deliver from darkness and shadows.
You will be renowned on the earth and in the heavens,
a freely-arising Jina.
Having the marks of a great being,
you are praised by those worthy of praise.
By the merit of this eulogy,
may we be like you, O Lion of Teachers!"

In this way, O monks, the Bodhisattva left home. Crossing the land of the Śākyas, the land of the Kroḍyas, and the land of the Māllas, by the time daylight appeared, he had arrived in the city of Anumaineya, in the land of the Maineyas. There the Bodhisattva alighted from his horse Kaṇṭhaka, and standing upon the earth, he dismissed the great host of gods, nāgas, gandharvas, asuras, garuḍas, kinnaras, and mahoragas. Having dismissed them, he thought: "I will now dismiss Chandaka and hand Kaṇṭhaka and these ornaments over to him."

Then calling Chandaka, the Bodhisattva said to him: "Go, Chandaka. Take these ornaments and Kaṇṭhaka, and

return to the palace." At the place from which Chandaka retraced his steps, a caitya stands, which is still known today as Chandakanivartana, The Return of Chandaka.

Then the Bodhisattva reflected: "How can I become a wandering monk with my hair still long?" And cutting his hair with his sword, he threw it to the wind. The Thirty-three gods gathered the Bodhisattva's hair to do it honor, and even today the gods celebrate the Festival of the Locks of Hair. There also a caitya stands, which is still known today as Cūḍāpratigrahaṇa, The Collected Locks of Hair.

Again, the Bodhisattva thought: "How can I become a wandering monk when I clothe myself in silken garments woven with gold and silver? It would be better if I had saffron-colored garments, suitable for living in the forest."

Then the gods of the Śuddhāvāsa realm considered: "The Bodhisattva needs saffron-colored apparel." And a devaputra appeared before the Bodhisattva in the form of a huntsman in saffron-colored garb. The Bodhisattva said to him: "Friend, if you were to give me your clothes, I would give you my silken garments." The other said: "These clothes suit you; those clothes suit me." The Bodhisattva said: "Then I accept them."

So the devaputra in the form of a huntsman gave the Bodhisattva the saffron-colored garments and took the prince's raiment for himself. Filled with respect, he placed the Bodhisattva's garments on his head with his two hands and returned to the world of the gods to do them honor. That was seen by Chandaka. There, too, a caitya stands, which is still known today as Kāṣāyagrahaṇa, The Taking of the Princely Garments.

As soon as the Bodhisattva had cut off his hair and donned the saffron garments, a hundred thousand joyous devaputras, transported with delight and filled with enthusiasm, called out: "Yes, friends! The young Siddhārtha has become a wandering monk! He has become a monk! Now he shall attain perfect and complete Enlightenment and turn the Wheel of the Dharma. He shall deliver beings from birth and old age, from sickness and death, from sorrow, lamentation, and pain, from depression and anxiety. He shall ferry them across the ocean of existence and establish them in the unsurpassed sphere of the Dharma, happy, free of fear, sorrow, and confusion, calm, without desire, and beyond death."

And these words of joy passed from one dwelling to another, up to the realm of the gods of Akaniṣṭha.

In the meantime, the women of the inner apartments, not seeing the young prince, were looking for him in the winter, summer, and rainy season palaces, in his beds of rest, and in his apartments. In spite of their searches, they did not find him, and they began to cry out all at once like fish hawks.

Tormented by grief, the women cried out: "Ah, my son!" "Ah, my brother!" "Ah, my husband!" "Ah, my protector!" "Ah, my lord!" They wept, uttering many tender words and beating their breasts. They moaned with heads lowered or cried in each other's arms. They wept with wild eyes; some covered their faces. Some beat their thighs or breasts or bruised their arms; some pounded their heads against the wall. Some wept as they covered their heads with dust, and some pulled out their hair. Some raised their arms and uttered great lamentation; like gazelles pierced by poisoned

arrows, they ran headlong, wailing. Some tossed their bodies to and fro in grief like palm trees shaken by the wind. Some rolled on the ground, unable to catch their breath. Some writhed like fish drawn from the water; great moans escaped them, like the sound of trees with their roots torn up, falling violently to earth.

When the king heard this noise, he asked the Śākyas: "What is this great sound coming from the women's apartments?" And the Śākyas, having been informed, replied: "Your Majesty, the young prince cannot be found." "Quickly!" said the king. "Close the gates of the city! Let us look for the young prince within!"

They looked both inside and outside, but they could not find him. Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī collapsed, and rolling on the earth, she moaned: "Great King, let me quickly be reunited with my son!"

The king sent messengers on horseback to the four directions, ordering them not to return until they had found the young prince.

Since it had been predicted by the soothsayers and those who know the signs that the Bodhisattva would depart through the Gate of Benediction, the king's messengers left through that gate. When they saw the flowers that had rained down lying in the road, they thought: "It is by this road that the prince left."

A little farther on, they caught sight of the devaputra carrying the richly woven garments of the Bodhisattva on his head, and they thought: "If those are the garments of the young prince, is it not possible that he has been killed?" But just as they started after the devaputra, they saw Chandaka

approaching with Kaṇṭhaka and the ornaments, and said: "Let us not do anything in haste. Chandaka is approaching, leading Kaṇṭhaka. Let us question him."

And so they questioned Chandaka: "Has the young prince been killed for his silken garments?" Chandaka replied: "No. Quite the contrary. This devaputra gave the young prince his saffron garb, and in return, the prince gave him his garments woven with gold and silver thread." And even as they spoke, the devaputra soared off to the world of the gods, intending to honor the Bodhisattva's garments, which he held on his head with both hands.

The messengers questioned Chandaka again: "What do you think, Chandaka? Will it be possible to make the prince return?" Chandaka replied: "No, certainly not. The young prince is firm in his resolution and his valor. This is what he said to me: 'I will not return to the great city of Kapilavastu until I have acquired supreme and perfect Enlightenment.' And since the prince said this, it will be so. It would be impossible to bring back the young prince, so firm are his resolution and valor."

Then Chandaka, leading Kaṇṭhaka and carrying the ornaments, returned to the palace and the women's apartments. There, the young Śākyas, Bhadrika, Mahānāma, and Aniruddha each tried to lift the ornaments, but could not do so, for it would have taken one strong as Nārāyaṇa and Ardha-nārāyaṇa to lift them.

Since no one could move them, Mahāprajāpatī Gautamī thought: "As long as I see his ornaments, sorrow will be in my heart. Should they be thrown into a pond?" And so this was done; the ornaments were thrown into the deep waters,

and even today this pond is known as Ābharaṇapuṣkari, Pond of the Ornaments.

Concerning this it is said:

After the wise and courageous Bodhisattva has left home,
the entire city of Kapila awakens, thinking:
"The young prince is sleeping,"
and joyfully, they converse with each other.

When Gopā and the queen's attendants awaken,
they look at the Bodhisattva's couch and find it empty.
"Alas!" they cry. "We have been betrayed!
Where has the Bodhisattva gone?"

The king, hearing this lament,
falls to the earth, crying out: "Ah, my only son!"
Sprinkling him with water from silver ewers,
the Śākyas rouse the distraught king.

Gopā, fallen from her bed to the ground,
tears at her hair and her ornaments.
"Alas! The Guide of Men told me this would come to pass!
But the separation from everything
which is dear to me comes too soon!

"Beautiful one, most beautiful of all,
with faultless and well-proportioned limbs;
brilliant one, perfectly pure, fortunate and happy one
who has won the hearts of all and is beloved of all creatures;
who is worthy of being honored in heaven and on earth,
where did you go after slipping away from my couch?

"So long as the Bodhisattva, the one filled with virtue,
is not before my eyes, my thirst will go unslaked;
no appetite will I have; no more will I bathe;
I will take the earth as my couch
and the tangled hair of ascetics as my crown.
I shall make mine the customs of ascetics.

"All the gardens are barren of flowers and fruit!
The garlands are faded and seem covered with dust.
Abandoned by the best and greatest of men,
this city has lost its beauty— it is like a desert.

"Alas! The women's apartments,
filled with shining ornaments,
with the harmonies of instruments and sweet voices,
veiled with golden trellises even by day:
I will look upon them no more,
deprived of the one filled with virtues."

The sister of the Bodhisattva's mother
gives Gopā solace, though she herself
is seized with violent sorrow:
"Do not weep, daughter of the Śākyas!
Long ago it was said by the greatest of men:
'I shall act to deliver the people of the world
from the sorrow of old age and death!' "

By the middle of the night,
the Great Ṛṣi, practiced in thousands of virtues,
has reached a distance of six yojanas.
He gives the finest of horses and the ornaments
to Chandaka, saying: "Take them and return
to the city of Kapila.

"To my mother and father, repeat these words from me:
'The young prince has left; please grieve no more.

When he attains the Enlightenment of a Buddha,
he will return. Then you will hear the Dharma,
and your minds will be at rest!' "

Chandaka, weeping, says to the Guide:
"I have neither power nor strength nor courage.
The family of the best of men may strike me, saying:
'Chandaka, where did you take
the virtuous Bodhisattva?' "

"Fear nothing, Chandaka," the Bodhisattva replies.
"When they have found joy,
my family will see in you a teacher;
they will love you as they have loved me."

Leading the great horse and carrying the ornaments,
Chandaka returns to the garden of the best of men.
The guard espies him coming, and bursting with joy,
tells the Śākyas the happy news:

"The young prince has returned to the garden
with the best of horses and Chandaka!
We need weep no more!"
Surrounded by the Śākyas, the king is told the news
and hurries to the garden filled with joy.

But Gopā gives no credence to this rumor.
She knows the firmness of the Bodhisattva's mind
and therefore does not rejoice.
It cannot be that, having left, the young prince will return
without having attained Enlightenment.

When he sees only the horse and Chandaka,
King Śuddhodana utters a great cry
and falls prostrate on the ground. "Ah! My son!

So clever at singing and at playing instruments!
You have left the kingdom. Where have you gone?

"Chandaka, tell me truly.
What is the aim of the Bodhisattva,
and where has he gone?
Who opened the gates? Who led him away?
How did the gods show him honor?"

Chandaka replies: "Listen to me, Lord of Kings.
At midnight when the young and old
in the city were deeply sleeping,
the Bodhisattva said to me in a soft voice:
'Chandaka, quickly bring me the king of horses.'

"And I sought to awaken the troops of men,
to rouse the multitude of women,
but sleeping as in a trance, they did not hear my voice.
Weeping, I brought him the king of horses,
and said: 'Go then where you like
to accomplish your good works!'

"The doors fortified by iron chains were opened by Śakra;
each of the Four Guardians of the World
lifted up one foot of the horse.
When the hero mounted,
the three thousand worlds were shaken.
Into the immense sky, he advanced.

"A great light was pouring forth,
destroying the darkness and the shadows.
Flowers fell; hundreds of musical instruments sounded;
the gods and the apsarases praised him.
He advanced through the sky,
surrounded by hosts of the gods."

Then taking the horse and the ornaments with him,
Chandaka goes in tears to the women's quarters.
At the sight of Chandaka and the best of horses,
Gopā faints and falls to the ground.

The entire assembly of women hasten to her aid,
and they bathe the daughter of the Śākyas
with water, saying: "In truth, she is going to die!
Separated from the one with whom she shares great love,
she will be overcome by grief."

The desolate daughter of the Śākyas arises with great effort
and wraps her arms around the neck of the king of horses.
Remembering the loving games of former times,
she speaks her sorrow in various ways:

"O you who made my joy! O my love,
Greatest of Men, with a face like the spotless moon!
O my husband, most beautiful of the beautiful,
endowed with the excellent signs,
clothed in spotless brilliance!

"O my husband, flawless in limbs,
well-born, unequaled in nobility!
O my lord, endowed with the most outstanding virtues,
honored by gods and men, supremely compassionate!

"O my husband, endowed with the strength and vigor
of Nārāyaṇa, conqueror of the enemy troops!
O my husband with voice soft as the nightingale,
sweet as the voice of Brahmā!

"O my lord of infinite glory,
elevated by a hundred meritorious works,
possessor of spotless virtues!
O my husband of infinite grace,

adorned with a multitude of virtues,
who brings joy to the assembly of ṛṣis!

"O my love, born in the Lumbinī garden
where the buzzing of bees is heard!
O my lord of glorious name,
tree of knowledge honored by gods and men!

"O my love of the sweetest taste,
with lips red as the fruit of the bimba,
with eyes long as the petals of the lotus,
with skin the color of gold!
O my husband with pure, even teeth,
white as heifer's milk and morning frost!

"O my love with beautiful features,
with brows bearing the spotless sign ūrṇā!
O my husband, with shoulders well-formed,
with the bow-shaped waist,
with the finely-formed legs of a deer!

"O my love with thighs like the trunk of an elephant,
with pure and beautiful hands and feet,
with fingernails copper red!
Your attributes, produced by your great merit,
brought joy to all.
Your songs, your concerts,
your gifts of flowers and aloes:
such times of happiness you gave us all!

"Perfumed by the most well-chosen flowers,
you are the most beautiful of the beautiful seasons!
O you who had for me the fragrance of the flowers!
O you who brought joy to the women's apartments!

"Ah, Kaṇṭhaka, noble charger, my husband's companion,
where have you taken him? Ah, pitiless Chandaka,
you did not call out when the Best of Men was leaving!

"He has left, the one who came to give us help.
Why did you not say a single word?
Today the compassionate Guide of Men departed the city!

"How did the Great Benefactor depart?
Who helped him leave the royal palace?
Wherever he has gone, a goddess of the woods and forests
will surely be his fortunate companion now.

"To me, Chandaka, a treasure was revealed.
Now what cruel affliction!
Ravisher of my eyes, give back my sight!
O Chandaka, a father and mother
must always be praised and honored;
yet he has abandoned them.
Why not then abandon the pleasure of being with a wife!

"Ah, accursed be the separation from those one loves.
How inconstant, this shifting spectacle, this dance!

"The ignorant, caught by their thoughts,
and by the effect of their bad views,
are subject to birth and rebirth.
And so indeed he said:
'For those made up of composite elements,
subject to old age and death,
there are no friends, there is no pleasure.'

"May his hope be fulfilled.
May he attain the highest Enlightenment!

When he has become a Buddha beneath the great tree,
when he possesses Enlightenment free from defilement,
may he return here to the best of cities!"

Deeply do these words of Gopā
afflict the heart of Chandaka,
and he replies with trembling voice:
"Gopā, listen carefully. At the hour of midnight,
the women were sleeping, and he stood there alone.
The one who has raised himself up
by hundreds of merits said to me then:

" 'Bring me Kaṇṭhaka!'
And when I heard these words,
I looked at you asleep on your couch, and I cried out loudly:
'Arise, Gopā! Your beloved is departing!'
But a god stifled the cry, and not a woman awoke.

"Weeping I brought him the king of horses,
decorated with all his ornaments.
Kaṇṭhaka advanced with a terrible splendor,
the clatter of his hooves resounding for a krośa;
yet no one in the city heard.

"For all had been plunged into sleep by the gods.
The earth, covered with gold and silver,
and with many precious stones,
gave forth a muffled sound, frightening and solemn,
as the hooves of Kaṇṭhaka struck with great force.

"But no one heard; none awoke.
At that moment, the constellation Puṣya had risen,
and the moon and stars were shining in the firmament.

Tens of millions of gods and the hosts of yakṣas and rākṣasas
crowded the sky; they bowed their heads
and with joined palms respectfully made obeisance.

"The Four Guardians of the World,
those great magicians,
bore up the feet of Kaṇṭhaka with their pure hands,
spotless as the stamens of the lotus.

"Mounted on his horse, raised up
by the splendor of virtues,
he was like the flower of the red lotus and the jasmine.
The earth was shaken strongly in six ways,
and the Buddha-fields were illumined with pure light.

"Śakra himself, the master of the gods,
the husband of Śacī, opened the gates,
and the Bodhisattva advanced,
preceded by hundreds of millions of gods,
adored by the gods and the nāgas.

"Knowing he carried the Protector of the World,
Kaṇṭhaka bore the Sugata away;
troops of gods and asuras joined them
traveling through the sky.

"With songs of benediction, the gods and the apsarases
called out the virtues of the Bodhisattva.
Singing sweetly to Kaṇṭhaka,
they gave him strength and brought joy to his heart:

" 'Kaṇṭhaka! Carry the Guide of the World,
quickly, quickly! Fear nothing at all!

You will meet with no danger, you will travel no bad roads,
for you carry the Guide of the World.'

"Each of the gods rejoiced in his heart, thinking:
it is I who am carrying the Guide of the World!
Not a space was left untrodden by the feet
of gods by the millions, exclaiming:

" 'See, Kaṇṭhaka, in the midst of the sky,
the road spreads out, marked by jeweled altars,
decorated so well,
and scented with the smoke of perfumes
made of the most subtle essences.

" 'For this fine action, Kaṇṭhaka,
you will enjoy divine pleasures
in the abode of the Thirty-three gods,
surrounded and preceded by apsarases.' "

Chandaka continued: "Good Gopā! Weep no more.
Be happy and filled with great joy.
You will soon see the Best of Men,
after he obtains Enlightenment in the presence of the gods.

"O Gopā, one must not weep
for those who have done good works.
Rejoice, for the Bodhisattva has lifted himself up
by the splendor of a hundred merits.
O do not weep for him!

"O Gopā, when the prince departed,
honored by men and gods,
the glory of the spectacle could not be described,
even if one should speak for seven days.

"Consider your greatest benefit,
incomprehensible to thought:
having served the one who brings aid to the world,
you in turn will become the Best of Beings!"

The Fifteenth Chapter
The Departure from Home



Śrī Vaiśravaṇa

The Voice of the Buddha

"The whole of the three worlds is burning,
tormented by the three fires
fueled by the objects of the senses, [illegible] passions, by desire.
But you will relieve the suffering [illegible] emotionality.
Having spread the cloud of the [illegible]ma
over the [illegible] thousand worlds
you will [illegible] down the rain [illegible]mortality.

"Your words are full of love and compassion,
and your speech is soft;
your voice rings out with the sweet accents of Brahmā,
going straight to the heart.
O Bhagavat, you will cause
the great voice of a Buddha to be heard,
and quickly make known the precepts
throughout the three thousand worlds . . .

"You clear away the darkness of ignorance,
the thick cloud of the fettering passions.
The Being has appeared
whose light of wisdom illuminates all things.

With the light of wisdom and the ray of understanding,
dispel the great darkness of the world!

"Abundant are the benefits for gods and men
when such a pure being appears in the world.
A perfectly purified jewel of beings,
he will close off the lower paths
and open the paths of the gods."

Showering heavenly flowers on the city of Kapila,
the gods circumambulate three times
and praise the child with respect, saying aloud:
"It is the Buddha! The excellent Buddha!"

Buddhism

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